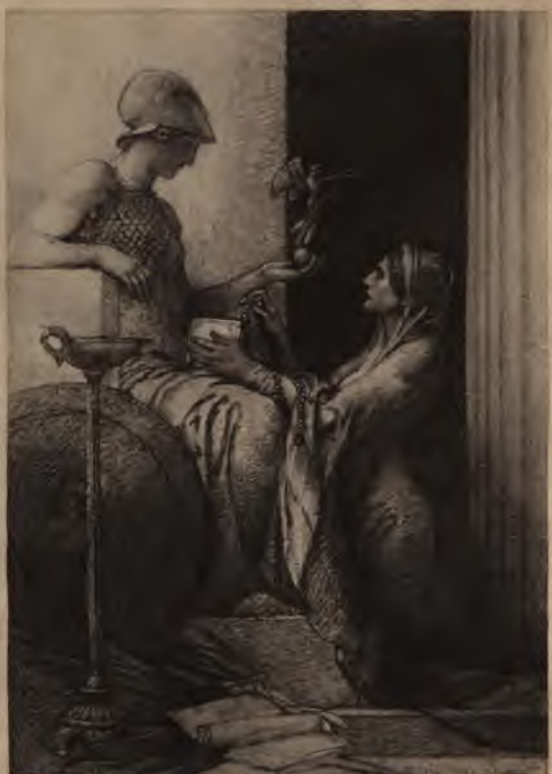
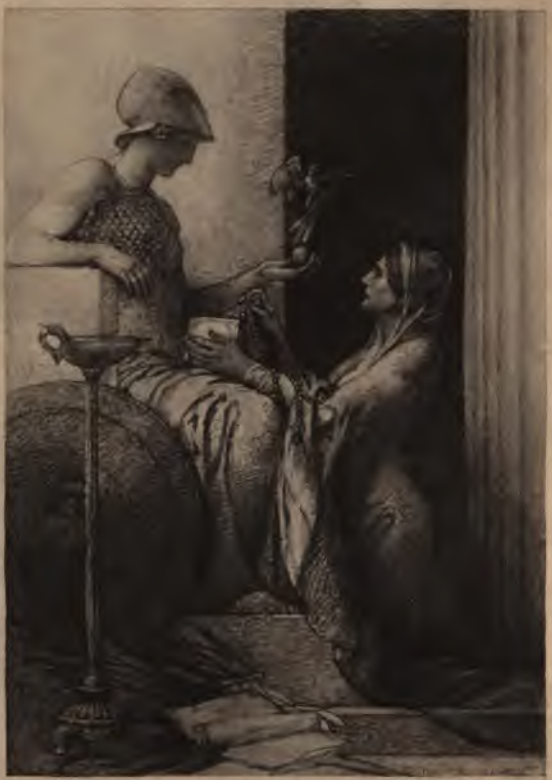
Socialism and Agriculture





FABIAN SOCIALIST SERIES, No. 2

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SOCIALISM AND AGRICULTURE

THE FABIAN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1883

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SOCIALISM AND AGRICULTURE

By

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SOCIALISM AND AGRICULTURE

I. THE VILLAGE AND THE LANDLORD

By EDWARD CARPENTER

Reprinted by permission from the "Albany Review," April, 1907

MY object in this paper is simply to describe the economic conditions of a single country parish, here in England, and from the consideration of these conditions to draw some inferences towards our future policy with regard to the land. In modern life—in every department of it, one may say—bedrock facts are so veiled over by complex and adventitious growths that it is difficult to see the proper and original outline of any problem with which we are dealing ; and so it certainly is in this matter of the land question. Any one glancing at a country village, say in the neighbourhood of London, probably sees a mass of villas, people hurrying to a railway station, motor-cars, and so forth ; but as to where the agricultural workers are, what they are doing, how they live, what their relations may be to the land and the land owners—these things are obscure, not easily seen, and difficult to get information about. And yet these are the things, one may say, which are most vital, most important.

The parish which I have in mind to describe is a rather large and straggling parish in a rural district, with a small population, some 500 souls, almost entirely agricultural in character, consisting of farmers, farm labourers, wood-

men, and so forth, with a few miners and small artizans—on the whole a pretty hard-working, industrious lot. Fortunately, one may say, there is hardly anything resembling a villa in the whole parish; there is no resident squire, and the business man is conspicuous by his absence. The place therefore forms a good example for the study of the agricultural land question. The farms are not over large, being mostly between fifty and one hundred acres in extent. There is just the land, and the population living mainly by the cultivation of it. This population, as I have hinted, is not lacking in industry; it is fairly healthy and well grown; there is no severe poverty; and (probably owing to the absence of the parasite classes) it is better off than most of our agricultural populations. Yet it is poor, one may almost say very poor. Probably, of the hundred families in the parish, the *average* income is not much over £60 a year; and many, of course, can by no means reach even that standard.

Financial conditions of the village.—Let us consider some of the financial and other conditions which lead to this state of affairs. In the first place, I find that the inhabitants have to pay in actual rent to their landlords about £2,500 a year. In fact, the gross estimated rental of the parish is about £3,250, but as there are quite a few small freeholders the amount actually paid in rent is reduced to £2,500. Nearly the whole of this goes out of the parish and never comes back again. The duke and most of the other landlords are absentees. This forms at once, as is obvious, a severe tax on the inhabitants. One way or another the hundred families out of what they produce from the land have to pay £2,500 a year into alien hands—or, averaging it, £25 per family! and this, if their average income is now only £60, is certainly a heavy burden; since, if they had not to pay this sum, their income might be £85. No doubt it will be said, "Here we see the advantage of having resident squires. The money would then return to the parish." But would it? Would it return to those who produced it? No; it would not. The spoliation of the toilers would only be disguised, not

remedied. In fact, let us suppose (a quite ordinary case) that the parish in question were owned by a single resident squire, and that the £2,500 were paid to him in rent. That rent would only go to support a small extra population of servants and dependents in the place. One or two small shops might be opened; but to the farmer and farm worker no advantage would accrue. There might be a slightly increased sale of milk and eggs; but this again would be countervailed by many disadvantages. "Sport" over all the farm lands would become a chronic nuisance; the standard and cost of living, dress, etc., would be raised; and the feeble and idiotic life of the "gentry," combined with their efforts to patronize and intimidate, would go far to corrupt the population generally. In this parish then, of which I am speaking, the people may be truly thankful that they have not any resident squires. All the same, the tax of £25 per family is levied upon them to support such squires in some place or other, and is a permanent burden upon their lives.

Enclosure of the commons.—Less than a hundred years ago there were in this parish extensive common lands. In fact, of the 4,600 acres of which the parish consists, 2,650, or considerably more than half, were commons. They were chiefly moors and woods; but were, needless to say, very valuable to cottagers and small farmers. Here was pasture for horses, cows, sheep, pigs, geese; here in the woods was firewood to be got, and bracken for bedding; on the moors, rabbits, bilberries, turf for fuel, etc. In 1820 these commons were enclosed; and this is another thing that has helped to cripple the lives of the inhabitants. As is well known, during all that period systematic enclosure of the common lands of Great Britain was going on. In a landlord House of Parliament it was easy enough to get bills passed. Any stick will do to beat a dog with; and it was easy to say that these lands, being common lands, were not so well cultivated as they might be, and that *therefore* the existing landlords ought to share them up. The logic might not be very convincing, but it served its purpose. The landlords appropriated the common

is nearly ruined is there any chance of his getting a corresponding abatement of rent. The rates, therefore, are a serious matter to the farmer; and something in the way of shifting their incidence, and distributing the burden more fairly, ought certainly to be done.

As an instance of this latter point, let me again refer to the parish in question. We have seen that some 2,600 acres of common lands passed over to the landlords in 1820, ostensibly for the public advantage and benefit. Of these, more than 1,500 acres of moor land, held by the duke, are rated on an estimated rental of less than 2s. 6d. per acre. The general farm lands of the parish are rated on an estimated rental of 14s. or 15s. per acre on the average. Thus the moor lands are assessed at about one-sixth of the value of the farm lands. This is perhaps excessively low; but the matter might pass, if it were not for a somewhat strange fact—namely, that a few years ago, when some twenty acres of these very moor lands were wanted for a matter of great public advantage and benefit, that is, for the formation of a reservoir, the ducal estate could not part with them under £50 an acre; and a little later, when an extension of acreage was required, the district council had to pay a much higher price, so that the total purchase, first and last, comes out at more than £150 per acre! Now here is something very seriously out of joint. Either the moor lands are worth a capital value of £150 an acre, in which case they ought to be assessed at, say £5, instead of at 2s. 6d.; or else, if the rating at 2s. 6d. is really just and fair, surely it is monstrous that the public, having to carry through a most important and necessary improvement, should be "held up" and made to pay a ruinous price, simply because the land cannot be obtained elsewhere. The conclusion is: Let such lands be rated in accordance with the capital value set upon them by their owners, and we shall have a much fairer and more equitable distribution of the public burden.

The nuisance of "sport."—And this matter of the moors leads to the consideration of a fourth cause which cripples the land cultivator terribly in this country. I

mean Sport. The nuisance and detriment that this is to the farmer has become so great that, unless strict measures are soon taken, widespread ruin will ensue. In many subtle ways this acts. With the enormous growth of wealthy and luxurious classes during the last fifty years the tendency has been to turn the country districts into a mere playground. The very meaning of the word sport has changed. The careful working of covers by the occasional sportsman has been replaced by clumsy battues, with wild shouts and shrieks of "drivers," and huge slaughter of birds, half tame, and specially bred for the purpose. Mobs of people, anxious to appear fashionable, and rigged out by their tailors in befitting costume, are formed into shooting parties. Rich men, wanting to get into society, hire moors and woods, regardless of expense, regardless of animal slaughter, regardless of agricultural interests, as long as they get an opportunity to invite their friends.

The financing of these affairs is funny. A large moor will let for the grouse season for £3,000, say on the condition of grouse being bagged up to, but not beyond, 2,400 brace. Mid-week parties hurry in by rail and motor, stay for two or perhaps three nights, and hurry off again, to be succeeded by other parties the following weeks. The whole thing is conducted in the most mechanical way, with "drives," "batteries," and so forth. And when the expenses are added up, including men employed, guests entertained, and rent paid, they certainly do not fall far short of the proverbial guinea a bird!

In Devonshire to-day the farms in many parts are simply eaten up by rabbits, because the landlords, in order to provide plenty of shooting, insist on spinneys and copses and hedgerows and waste bits being retained in their wild state for purposes of cover! On the northern moors the rabbits similarly devastate the farms along the moor edges —not because the rabbits are preserved, for the shooting is mainly of grouse and pheasants, but because the moors, being uncared-for except in this way, the rabbits are allowed to multiply without check. They are the gamekeeper's perquisite. Yet if the farmer who has a farm adjoining the moor carries a gun to protect himself against

a real paralysis of their thinking capacity and their enterprise. But place these men in a position where the fruits of their toil will be secure, where improvements can be made, in cottage or farm, with a sense of ownership, and where their vote and voice in the councils of the parish will not be dependent on squire or parson; and the world will be astonished at the result.

Public ownership.—There are two main directions in which to go in the matter of secure tenure. One is the creation of more small freeholds; the other is the throwing of lands into the hands of public authorities, and the creation of permanent tenures under them. Though the latter embodies the best general principle, I do not think that forms a reason for ruling out freeholds *altogether*. In all these matters variety is better than uniformity; and a certain number of freeholds would probably be desirable. In the same way, with regard to public ownership, if anything like nationalization of the land is effected, I think it should decidedly be on the same principle of variety—creating not only State and municipal ownership, but ownership by county councils, district councils, parish councils, etc.—with a leaning perhaps towards the more *local* authorities, because the needs of particular lands and the folk occupying them are likely on the whole to be better understood and allowed for in the locality than from a distance.

Let us suppose, in the parish which I have taken for my text, that by some kind of political miracle, all the lands on which rents are now being paid to absent landlords were transferred to the ownership of the Parish Council. Then at once the latter body would come into an income of £2,500 a year. At one blow the whole burden of the rates would fall off, and still a large balance be left for public works and improvements of all kinds. It might be allowable, for a moment, to draw a picture of the Utopian conditions which would ensue—the rates all paid, the rents milder and more equal than before, the wages of parish workers raised, free meals for school-children provided, capital available for public buildings, free libraries,

agricultural engines and machinery, also for improving or administering common lands and woods, and so forth.

There is no danger, of course, of so delirious an embarrassment actually occurring! for any scheme of nationalization would take a long time, and would only gradually culminate; and no scheme would place the whole lands of a parish at the disposal of a single body like the parish council. But the example helps us to realize the situation. Every farmer and cottager whose holding was under a public body would know and feel that whatever rent he might have to pay, it would come back to him in public advantages, in the ordaining of which he would have a voice; he would know that he would be in no danger of disturbance as long as he paid his rent; and in the matter of capital improvements in land or building he might either make them himself (with the council's consent), in which case, if he should decide later on to quit the holding, the council would compensate him, knowing that the rental paid by the new tenant would be correspondingly increased; or he could get the council (if willing) to make the improvement, and himself pay a correspondingly increased rent for it. In either case he would have as good a bargain, and almost as free a hand, as if he were on his own freehold.

Small holdings.—Security of tenure, largely through public ownership, must certainly be one of the first items of a land-reform programme. Another item, the importance of which is now being widely felt, is the making provision for the effective supply of small holdings. Whether the present Small Holdings and Allotments Act (of 1907) *will* prove effective or not remains to be seen. But something effective in that direction must clearly be done.

The Act of 1907 defines a "small holding" as exceeding one acre and not exceeding fifty acres. By small holdings I would rather be understood to mean holdings, freehold or leasehold, from twenty-five acres down to one or two acres in extent, each with cottage and buildings

attached. Of this class of holding (largely owing to the "rolling up" policy of last century) there is an absolute famine in the land. The demand, the outcry, for them is great, but the supply is most scanty. Yet this class covers some of the most important work of modern agriculture, and a great variety of such work. It includes, in its smaller sizes, market gardens, with intensive culture of all kinds, and glass, besides the kind of holding occupied by the professional man or other worker who supplements his income by some small cultivation; and in its larger sizes it includes nurseries, as well as small arable and pasture farms. The starvation that exists to-day in Britain of all these classes of industry is a serious matter.

It will be said that if there is such a demand for small holdings, the supply will soon by natural laws be forthcoming. But as a matter of fact under our present system this is not so—and for three reasons: (1) The slowness of the landed classes to perceive the needs of the day—even though to their own interest; (2) The want of capital among a great number of them which makes them unwilling to face the breaking up of large farms and the building of extra cottages; (3) The fact that those who have money are careless about public needs, and do not *want* to see a sturdy population of small holders about their doors.

In the parish with which we are dealing, owing partly to its distance from a market, the demand for such holdings takes chiefly the form of a demand for small arable and pasture farms. But the need of these is great, as indeed it is nearly all over the country. A holding of this kind, of any size from five to twenty acres, forms an excellent stepping-stone for a farm labourer or farmer's son towards a position of independence. A second or third son of a farmer, not likely to follow his father in the occupation of the farm, has to-day only a poor prospect. Unable to command enough capital to stock a large farm himself, and unable to find a small one, he has but two alternatives —to drift down into the fruitless life of the farm labourer, or else to go off and try his luck in town. If, as is mos

often the case, he is twenty-five or so before the need of making a decision comes upon him, his chances of learning a town trade are closed, and the first alternative is all that is left. Yet the small holder of this kind is often one of the most effective and useful types of agricultural worker. On a holding, say, of fifteen acres, while he cannot get an adequate living for himself and family by ordinary farm methods, yet he can gain a considerable amount, which he supplements by working as a useful hand for neighbours at harvest and other times. Being thrown on his resources, and not having too much land, he gains more than the average out of it, and his own ingenuities and capacities are developed; so that, as a rule, he is the most resourceful and capable type of man in the district. It is of the most vital importance to the country that this type of man, and his class of holding, should be encouraged.

Agricultural co-operation.—There is one method which I have so far neglected to mention by which both security of tenure and small holdings can be obtained—I mean Co-operation. The formation of co-operative societies for the purchase of large farms, for the division of them, the building of cottages, and the leasing of small holdings so obtained, is one of the most hopeful directions for the future. It ought to be easy for the public authorities to lend money on perfectly safe terms for this purpose. What co-operation has done and is doing for agriculture in other countries—in the way of establishing banks, land-holding societies, societies for butter-making, egg-collecting, buying of feeding stuffs and manures, sale of produce, etc.—is now perfectly well known. Ireland even has left England behind in this matter; but England and Scotland will have to level up. It is a sign, at least of good intentions, that the new Act gives power to the County Councils to promote and assist the formation and working of co-operative agricultural societies of all kinds.

Re-transfer of old common lands and declaration of land values.—One of the very first things, I think, which

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ought to be taken up is this question of the commons. If ten million acres between 1760 and 1880 passed so easily from the public use into the exclusive hands of the land owners, surely there ought not to be much difficulty in passing them back again. As I have said, they were appropriated mainly on the plea that, being commons, they were inadequately cultivated. The main cultivation they have received from the landlords has been of rabbits, grouse, and other game! The public has been simply played with in the matter; and agricultural interests, instead of being extended and improved, have been severely damaged. When we realize, in addition to this, that, owing to the increase of the general population and its needs, these tracts which passed into private hands with such slender compensation to the public are now held up at ruinous prices, we realize that it is high time that the game should cease; and that the lands which Parliament voted away from the public in those days should now be voted back again—and with "compensation" on a similar scale. These lands are still largely in the hands of the families to whom they were awarded; and the transfer could perhaps be most fairly and reasonably effected by their simple reversion to the public on the expiration of existing life interests in them. But, of course, there would have to be land courts to deal with and compensate special cases, as where the land had changed hands, and so forth.

The value of such ancient common lands to the public would now be very great. Large portions of them would be suitable for cultivation and for allocation in small holdings; the villages would again have a chance of public playgrounds and cricket grounds; the parish councils would have lands (so much needed and so difficult to obtain) for allotment gardens; the district councils might turn many an old woodland into a public park; while the wilder moors and mountains could be held under county councils or the State, either for afforestation or as reserves for the enjoyment of the public, and the preservation of certain classes of wild animals and birds, now in danger of extinction.

Let a large measure of this kind be passed retransferring the main portion of the common lands into public hands; and at the same time a measure compelling owners in the future to declare their land values, and giving power to the public bodies to purchase on the basis of the values so declared; and already we should have made two important steps towards bringing the land of the nation into the possession of its rightful owners.

II. THE SECRET OF RURAL DEPOPULATION

By LIEUT.-COL. D. C. PEDDER

THE question "Why do I stay where I am?" is one that interests all of us. Its answers range between that of Sterne's starling with the simple "I can't get out" and that of the happy few who can say, "It is well for us to be here." But most people who are what in the country we call "fixters" have to confess that they are the prisoners of habit. The more regular our life, the harder it is to break away from its rule.

Now, of all occupations that of the tiller of the soil is perhaps the most regular. He is hitched on to the zodiac. Every action of his working life is as recurrent as the seasons themselves. Ploughing is a step towards ploughing, sowing is a step towards sowing again. And so it goes round. The son of a field labourer, in the ordinary course of things, goes to field work as soon as the school will let him. By the time he is getting "man's money" he has little volition left. Habit has taken its place. The odds would seem to be long in favour of his remaining a field labourer for the term of his natural life.

But there is something more than habit to fasten him to the land. By the time he is sixteen he is specialized for field work. That is the only skilled labour for which he will ever be fit. Off the land he is only so much horse-power. He can dig—under direction—in a drain, or he can carry bales at the docks. He is past learning another craft. He is moored head and stern to the land by two hawsers, habit and hopelessness.

And yet his breaking away from the land is becoming

so common as to constitute a national danger. Why is this? We must go back, I think, to a period before rustic unrest began distinctly to take the form of escape.

The fauna of the country.—Up to some thirty odd years ago agricultural labourers were regarded as a quite permanent factor in the sum of English life. They were part of the *fauna* of the country—like pheasants and partridges; only there is no getting a good head of game without preserving, and there was no need to preserve country labourers. Sergeant Kite was almost the only poacher to be feared, and the toll he took was trifling. Now and then typhus or an emigration agent would descend upon a village, and a cottage would be empty for a month or so. But that was only a momentary inconvenience to an individual employer. The real difficulty was not how to breed labourers, like pheasants, but how to keep down their numbers, like rabbits. No more cottages were allowed upon an estate than would just supply roofage to the labourers it employed. Increase was not allowed for. Infant mortality was high. Overcrowding and sanitary neglect did their work. Semi-starvation helped. Still, however, the supply of labour exceeded the demand. Those were the days in which a great farmer is said to have offered a friend a guinea if he could find a weed in his wheat-field. With men's wages at 6s. or 7s. a week, women glad to take what they could get for field work, and corn at 50s. a quarter, the land could be well "done," as they say. The employer could be well "done," too. A great agriculturist's recollections of about this period were published a few years ago. They were a record of good living, *menus* of dinners, reminiscences of hunting breakfasts, conversations with admiring noblemen. "Hey, the green holly. This life is most jolly," ought to have been the motto of the book. The world went very well then—with squires and farmers.

I do not think the idea of what we call a "rural exodus" occurred seriously to any one before the early seventies. There was the land, and that there should be men to till it seemed a law of nature.

That the men might possibly one day turn their backs on the land in sufficiently large numbers to seriously inconvenience squires and farmers generally—this idea never entered the head of the average employer. Where were they to go? The land of Egypt, the house of bondage, was pretty secure in the deserts and seas that surrounded it. The prison was hard to break.

Looking at the wages and the housing of the labourer in those days, it really seems as though physical laws were all that prevented the process of degradation and deprivation of which he was the victim from being continued indefinitely. Men cannot work unless they eat—something. The proverbial straw a day had very nearly been reached. Out of English countrymen, the descendants of the men who rose in arms with Wat Tyler and Jack Cade, had been evolved by the sheer greed and selfishness of squires and farmers, a race so reduced by long-continued starvation and oppression that they seemed, generally, as incapable of resistance as their tyrants were, generally, incapable of ruth. "Hunger will tame a lion," says Robinson Crusoe.

The British farmer put the maxim to proof.

Froissart called the English common people of his day the haughtiest and most overweening that the world could show. That was in the fourteenth century. This is what Joseph Arch said at the end of the nineteenth: "I had seen my brother labourers stand and tremble like an aspen leaf at the dark look of the employer simply because they had not the pluck of men." You may see the same thing to-day. Nothing is sadder than the abjectness of the labourer before the scowl of his master.

The labourer who was to be hanged the other day, and who said "Thank ye, sir," to Jack Ketch on his adjusting the rope, is a fair instance of the attitude of his class to any Jack-in-office or authority. They are descended from generations of half-starved parents, and they show "the mettle of their pasture."

The farmer seemed to have done his work thoroughly. He had produced what he wanted, a submissive drudge who cost little, did his work, and gave no trouble

whatever. The labourer's hand had not yet lost its cunning.

In the days of the Corn Laws.—The work was done and done well. The farmers ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves. That the labouring population had any "rights" as against the "masters" was a notion dismissed with contempt as part of the professional agitator's stock-in-trade. "The country" meant the landlord and the farmer. When we think of Athens in the days of Pericles, we hardly give a thought to the slave population. They are below the notice of history. And so it practically was with our rural labourers until the days of the Agricultural Labourers' Union. The Church knew them as "the poor." To the employers they were "the men." Charles Kingsley, in "Alton Locke," gives a vivid description of an agricultural riot, its aimless despair, its impotent violence. I have here a reprinted report of a more peaceful demonstration in 1846. It is sad reading. But there is nothing in it to frighten anybody. The word "rising" cannot be applied to these pitiful wrigglings of the great invertebrate earth-worm upon which the classes then recognized as England were so light-heartedly treading. Its head was never reared to strike. Its demonstrations demonstrated nothing but its own feebleness. The repeal of the Corn Laws left the labourer morally much where he was. Bread was cheaper, but the hand of the employer was perhaps heavier than before. From 1855 to the days of Joseph Arch was perhaps as black a time as any the labourers had to pass. The price of wheat was high, the squires raised their rents, the farmers recouped themselves by cutting down wages. The prosperity of squires and farmers was thus squeezed out of the already abject poverty of the poor. Any appearance of discontent was sternly repressed. To quote the words of a great agricultural authority, "It was a state of things disgraceful to all concerned." *Except* to labourers, I think. But it created no commotion. The Church, represented in every country parish, raised no protest. The parson had long ceased to be the "persona" of his flock. He thought more of the hurdles than of the

sheep, as they say. The souls of squires and farmers *rotted* in the cradle of an easy conscience. They were good Churchmen to a man. Then, all at once, a bolt from the blue, came.

The Agricultural Labourers' Union.—I need not dwell upon the history of that great movement. Opposed though it was by the landed interest in every form, denounced by too many of the country clergy and unhelped by the rest, it went on triumphantly until it had raised agricultural wages almost throughout the whole of England to a point at which the existence of the labourer was no longer *intolerable*. That much obtained, it collapsed. It is a remarkable instance of a great rising against long-endured oppression which contented itself with a bare rectification of the immediate wrong complained of. There was no violence, no resentment. This was undoubtedly due in great measure to the personal character and influence of the leader of the movement, Joseph Arch, a man of whom it is impossible to think without gratitude and respect. But it is no less true that the moderation shown by the men, both in their struggle and their success, argues a certain want of resilience which testifies to the extent to which the fire and vigour of the race had been sapped by long-continued semi-starvation and enforced submission to petty tyranny. The Agricultural Union did not, I think, appreciably raise the labourer; it only raised his wages. Instead of calling up a spirit of independence like that which animated the leader (a man, we must remember, born and bred in a cottage the property of his father, not of his employer), it left them generally, although materially better off, individually as submissive and as incapable of assertion of their personal rights as they had been through long generations of practical serfdom.

But the apathy of their hopelessness had been disturbed. The employers' difficulty had been the emigration agents' opportunity, and the plethora of labour had been relieved by the departure of a large percentage of the agricultural population. When the smoke of the struggle cleared off it was quite obvious that horizons had widened. Young

men who dared not defy the arrogance of their employers found courage enough to escape from it to the railways or the towns. In this way the best young blood kept gradually draining away. The process has been steadily going on since.

The best men go. Labouring parents plot escape for their boys from the land as if they were prisoners in an enemy's country. Nobody stays of choice. You may hear former farm labourers speak of their late employers as a seventeenth century mariner might have spoken of the Moors of Tangier, among whom he had been a captive.

Is the labourer in fault?—It has been said by a vigorous clerical writer that the labourer's discontent is merely a survival from the " bad, old, black past," when he really had something to complain of. All that has long gone by. It is the labourer's " evil temper " that still " provokes masters to harsh measures, harsh words, driving, and all such seemingly needless regulations as the command to keep no fowls or pigs, the tied cottages, and the domineering tone." All this is the labourer's fault, says the writer. Things are not now as they were in the times when " labourers were scornfully trampled on—and when the Church, cowed and faithless, was as little inclined as the State to help their condition." All that is gone by. Farmers and parsons have undergone a wonderful change. Like the Homeric hero, they " boast that they are a great deal better than their fathers." But the labourer is bad indeed. The characteristics of the labourer are " shirking, dishonesty, and negligence." " Tom, Dick, and Sam abuse their employer, sit under the hedge when he is out of sight, steal his corn and meal, leave his horses harnessed and go off drinking, teach him that they have no love or gratitude, but only fear." The colouring suggests the moral complexion of a chain-gang. He might have adopted the words which Mr. Sam Weller in " Pickwick " puts into the mouth of a " wirtuous clergyman." " He's a malicious, bad-disposed, worldly-minded, spiteful, windictive creetur, with a hard heart as there ain't no soft'nin."

Our " wirtuous clergyman " in this case pronounces the

rural villages to be in a state of utter decay, and exhorts us to build our hopes for the future entirely upon the progress of our urban population. Villages and villagers are played out.

Well, I dissent entirely. I am no believer in sudden and unintelligible changes. Farmers are much what they were sixty years ago. Clergymen are not so very different. The cut of their coats is altered, that is about all. Their intentions are as good as ever, and the influence they exert exactly as bad, as far as the independence and manliness of their poor parishioners is concerned. And the labourer is what these have made him. He is still, as he has so long been, like an eel on an eel spear. He can wriggle, but that is about all. Until he is set free we can't expect anything very great of him in the way of moral improvement. But his good qualities are only dormant, held in abeyance till the winter of his discontent is made glorious by the sun of—Land Reform. At any rate, whatever he is, it is the social and economical system of England that has made him so. He has been crushed under an intolerable pressure, and until that is removed we must expect his faults to be of the grovelling sort. Give him opportunity and he will be erect, and his faults will probably be what they were in Froissart's time.

How the labourer lives.—Let us give one comprehensive glance to the conditions under which the labourer mostly lives, and under which some people expect him to cultivate all the Christian graces. A miserable cottage which as a tenant-at-will he can only repair or improve at the risk of his outlay in labour or in money being appropriated by his employer, a life of constant hardship, wages even now barely sufficient for food, fire, and clothing, the proud man's contumely, the want of hope, the long vista of thankless drudgery through which the eye looks only to rest finally upon the workhouse, the absence of anything like social enjoyment, the tyranny of drink, the capricious restrictions upon personal liberty of action which his employer may at pleasure impose, and to which he must submit or go. It is a gloomy picture.

The strange thing is that up to so comparatively recent a time Englishmen should have accepted a life like this, a life still worse than this, as their natural doom, exactly as an Esquimaux may submit unrepiningly to the rigours of an Arctic climate. An Esquimaux wants more seals; ice and snow and darkness are matters of course. So Joseph Arch's men wanted more wages, they had no dislike to their occupation or the hardships inseparable from it. The best of them had doubtless the same pride and pleasure in their work which every skilled craftsman finds in the exercise of his skill. A great change has passed over the labourer in this respect. Tillage in all its branches appears to most of them sheer drudgery, absolutely uninteresting if not positively hateful. No mere rise of wages will alter this.

Skilled labour and farm wages.—I do not think I can put this more forcibly before you than by condensing here a conversation I had a month or two ago with a man of the highest farming class, engaged in the management of one of those immense farms which seem to me to be the ruin of England.

It was a very favourable specimen. The management was evidently liberal, the owner, I believe, personally kindly. But the system was too strong. On this great farm the piecework principle was in force. "So if a man wastes his time, he wastes what is his own," said my informant. The scale of pay was high for the district. "With these wages the men save, I suppose?" I said. "No, never. It goes as it comes. The men who get most don't live more comfortably than the others." "Do they take much interest in the work?" "Not the very slightest. If it were not for the piecework plan we might as well give up." "Are the men who are now in their prime as skilled in their work as the old men used to be?" "There is no comparison." He referred to an old labourer who possessed nine arts. I will count them up. Hedging and ditching (in two varieties), dry fence making, rick building, thatching, hurdle making, sheep-cage making, mowing, brewing. "You have no labourer who can do the same

now?" "No, not one of them." "You mean no one man can do all?" "I mean that there is not a man on the farm who can do *one* of these things as it ought to be done."

Now, what is the reason of this? The general answer is "education." Education has something to do with it, doubtless. But let me read what Professor Thorold Rogers wrote in 1878 on the subject of rustic arts. He enumerates five or six, including ploughing, which I have omitted as too universal for special mention.

And he sums up thus: "Well, if you compare the work of the agricultural labourer who possesses the five or six qualifications I have mentioned with the work of an ordinary artizan who receives 35s. a week, the agricultural labourer, as regards the varied nature of his accomplishments, is inconceivably the superior of the artizan." I think we must add to this that the field hand is more exposed to wind and weather than the artizan. His life is a harder one. I have known men who lately have never had a dry stitch on them from Monday morning to Saturday night.

Now, let us suppose a farm hand to have mastered half a dozen of these arts. On the land he is *lucky* if he gets 15s. or 16s. a week, all counted. If he gets "on the line," the railway, just with pick and spade, he gets 18s. or 20s. What encouragement is there for a labourer to learn his craft? Again. The other day, in the village where I live, there was a little semi-political meeting, held by some working-men from a neighbouring town. It was a lively little business enough. But few labourers came. There was a largish group of farm hands at the door just before the speaking began. Some one, I was told, asked them if they were not coming in. "Well," says one, "we've been thinking it over. But if we come in we shall hear of it to-morrow from the master." So they went off. The yoke is never for a moment off the agricultural labourer's neck. I daresay the ganger looks after the platelayers on the line at their work sternly enough. But when a man shoulders his pick and goes home he is his own man. And that is what a farm hand never can say. Perhaps education may have helped him to feel it.

Why do men dislike farm labour? How is it possible that they should like it? Here is an occupation in which skill brings no reward, which marks a man quite early in life with an ineffaceable brand of social inferiority, which compels submission in a way almost unknown to any other, which offers no hope and does not even promise permanence enough for habit to go to work assuredly in the task of accommodating existence to its conditions.

All this explains discontent. But it does not explain why up to some thirty years ago the sort of discontent with which we now have to deal should apparently not have existed.

Education may have something to do with it. Even what a lad learns at the village school does to a certain extent develop his imaginative faculties; and imagination is like a kite. The stronger it flies the more it pulls its flyer after it. But personal contact with men from the outer world has done more. Modern ideas are introduced, not by the schoolmaster, but by the tramp, and the traveller, and the tallyman. The labourer sees himself through their eyes. And, what is more, *he sees his master*. The conditions under which he labours are degrading. This is strangely brought home to him by comparison of his position with that of others. And he confounds the labour with the conditions. A country labourer's great ambition is to disguise his occupation. As far as he can he dresses like a townsman, and wishes to be taken for one.

I lately read a book called "Mendip Annals," an account by Mrs. Hannah More's sister of the good work done in Somerset by those two plucky old ladies just a hundred years ago. Comparing the ordinary farmer as he is there depicted with Charles Kingsley's references to him in the forties, with what the condition of his labourers showed him to be in the fifties, with Joseph Arch's account of him in the seventies, and with what I have myself gathered from labourers and personal observation of his general character since, I should say that he had undergone less change in the course of the century than perhaps any other class of Englishman. A writer in "Longman's," commenting upon Mr. Rider Haggard's "Farmer's Year," says that

voked.) You would think that some apology was offered; you do not know the great farmer. Here is another case. A poor man had to carry round a circular, in which he was in no way concerned, emanating from the vicar of the parish. He took it to a great farmer in the same way as to the rest of the village. It did not please him, and he spoke very angrily to the bearer. Such an ebullition of temper is sometimes too sudden to be restrained. Yes, but for weeks afterwards (for ever afterwards, for aught I know to the contrary), when the poor man touched his hat, the great man passed on without noticing his salute. There is somewhere a fine translation of an old Spanish ballad of a Moorish king receiving the news of the taking of one of his towns by the enemy.

> "*Letters to the Monarch tell*
> *How Alahma's city fell.*
> *In the fire the scroll he threw*
> *And the messenger he slew.*"

The feeling is the same in both cases. Neither the fifteenth-century tyrant nor the nineteenth-century farmer could see any reason for repressing a natural feeling. Such men are not pleasant masters.

As far as my observation goes, I think primitive impulse is less restrained among non-working farmers than among any other equally well-fed and well-dressed class in England. For instance, cursing has died out among us generally. As villagers say, "We damn and done wi' it." It survives in corners where ridicule does not come. Here is rather an elaborate specimen of farming malediction. The speaker a well-gloved, well-hatted, well-groomed man, a non-working farmer. He had been disappointed (not in any way defrauded) of the services of the labourer to whom he was speaking.

"I wish you may die in a ditch without a rag to cover you or a crust of bread to put in your mouth. And I hope I may live to see it."

This want of the conscious self-restraint which is imposed by the pressure of public opinion produces what I

have called "characters." In one farm there may be a half-frantic sot; in another a man with a bad temper, which he will discharge by following a labourer "up a furrow and down a furrow," and swearing at him all the way. One wealthy agriculturist is famous for his cottages, which are known as "Tommy's Pigsties." He cannot bear to put his hand in his pocket for necessary repairs. It was in one of his cottages that the carpenter, going to measure a corpse for a coffin, started back in surprise. The white face was all streaked and blotched with green. It was only the drip of the rain through the rotten thatch —the moss, rather, for there was more moss than straw. "We've put un in the driest corner there was," said the family apologetically. People who live in the sight of society (I mean of those whom they consider their associates) may be proud, but their pride rarely takes an aggressive form. Villages are seldom visited by the search-ray of publicity. In them pride of class has its perfect working. A celebrated agriculturist in the Bible might be the patron saint of many of his modern fellows—Nabal. "Such a man of Belial that a man cannot speak to him." I have just been reading Sir Edmund Verney's book, "American Methods." Nothing is more striking than the easiness of access of the employer and the way he invites suggestions. I told a story once of a labourer, a friend of my own, who sat up nearly a whole night to get a plough of his master's fit for work—without so much as a thank you. The employer was a typical and leading man of his class. It would have been considered derogatory to notice a bit of work like that with a "thank you." Do what he will, the labourer is an unprofitable servant.

To sum up this part of my subject. The isolation and the habits of life of the non-working farmer tend strongly to exaggerate in him those selfish instincts which make a man intolerable to his dependents. This is the more galling because his authority has been stretched so as to cover matters that lie quite outside the ordinary sphere of the relations of employer and employed.

I give this a leading place in the causes of rural depopulation.

Cottages as booby-traps.—Another cause is to be found in the labourer's helplessness before what he rightly or wrongly considers injustice. I take the matter of housing as illustrative of this. Bad housing is admittedly one reason of rustic discontent. I speak here of the cottage merely as a booby-trap.

I used as a boy to read of the booby-birds on the islands of the South Seas. They sat in rows, and sailors knocked them on the head one after the other, without its occurring to them to fly away. Labourers are much of the same sort. So should we be, I suppose, if our faculties and our energies had been deliberately crushed down for generations. They are trapped one after the other with the most touching simplicity. But they do not like it. Irritations of this sort go on accumulating unnoticed until the cup runs over. It is running over now.

Most cottages are "tied" to farms. Say a farmer has a very bad one; how is he to get a labourer in and make him stay? What is he to do? First, there is the advertisement, "good cottage and garden." Much hiring is done by letter. The labourer sees the advertisement. To go and see the cottage means losing a day's wage. I wish the wives went. But they don't. And they don't encourage their husbands to go. There is the money lost to begin with, and very likely a bad head resulting from much strange beer; and, after all, "what could *he* tell if he saw it?" Such is the contempt felt for the masculine mind by our natural rulers! He applies by letter for the place, is accepted, and fetched over with family and furniture in his master's wagon. If he goes into the cottage provided, the trap falls. He will be had up before the magistrates if he refuses to fulfil his agreement of service, in writing or verbal. I must give instances. Here is one from an Oxfordshire paper of a couple of months ago. A labourer is inducted as I have described. He stays one day and goes. His plea is that he had not seen the inside of the cottage; that it was raining, and that he had no choice but to put his furniture and family under cover. The master's son says he took him round, and that he had "a chance" of seeing the inside before he took the place.

I have no doubt he might have seen it if he had insisted. But labourers, as a fact, have no courage to insist. He had *not* seen it. Fined £2 6s.; a month's wages, I suppose.

Here is another case in which a man made the best of a bad business, but grumbled loudly. The inside was here also in fault. "Well, didn't you see it before you took it?" "I seed the *outside* right enough. But the master as took I round didn't *happen* to have the key wi' 'un." Trapped!

The story I am going to tell came from the poor woman concerned through a lady who repeated it to me immediately afterwards exactly as I tell it. The family were engaged by advertisement. On arriving they found the "good cottage" a hovel, and refused to take their things off the wagon. On going up to the house they saw the master, "a girt big man, dressed up to the nines," who dealt roundly with them. "So you're the new carter. And you don't like your cottage. Now I'll tell 'ee summut. You've got to go where you be put and do what you be bid. I don't want none of your chat." They return to the wagon, the things still loaded, the woman resolute, the neighbours amused. The master comes down and bullies. The woman declares that she will spend the night where she is. The master goes away. On returning he changes his tactics and addresses the husband. "Now, don't you go on like this here, a-making a fool of I afore all the village! Come up to the house and talk it over reasonable."

He goes. The woman stays with the things and children. By and by at dark night he comes back "as drunk as ever I seed 'un." The things are put in. Trapped! "Why didn't you go to the clergyman?" asked my informant, scandalized. "Clergyman! why he and Mr. Blank be as thick as two thieves!"

A labourer came to a place by train. He wanted to "see things." The master met him and never lost sight of him till he put him into the train again after he had signed his agreement. The man came and stayed the twelvemonth he had agreed for. No more. *He did not even get the cottage he had been shown.* Trapped!

Here is a Hampshire case. The main facts are that the man was promised a good cottage and got one which, he said, was a bad one. That a number of labourers left the farm after he came, so that his position was different from what it would have been had the farm been full-handed. That his "little boys" (lads) were compelled to do work he had never agreed that they should do, and were paid next to nothing. Three were put to work, and two shillings a week was paid. It was admitted that the boys had had "a rough time for a bit," in consequence of shorthandedness. The man thought he had not been fairly treated, and left. He had a sickly wife and ten children. The cottage had only two bedrooms. He gave eight days' notice. He was fined with costs *eight guineas* for having broken his signed agreement. I inquired privately into the case from people who were in a position to know the circumstances. There was also some correspondence about it in the papers. He had the character of being a steady labourer. The impression left on my mind was that his place had become almost intolerable. What could he do? Prosecute his master for breach of contract? Farmers would laugh at the very idea. Once in the trap, he had to stay—or pay whatever fine country magistrates might impose.

The words used by the employer, the boys had "a rough time for a bit," cover a good deal. I will give you an instance.

The Society for Preventing Cruelty to Children was called in to help two poor boys signed away by their father (by his mark: he could not read or write), under an avowedly illegal agreement decorated with a sixpenny stamp to impress the signer, for two years to a farmer. The Society removed them at once, their condition of cold, filth, and misery being extreme. The excuse given (I heard it with my own ears) was that "life was a bit rough on a farm."

The conclusion of the whole matter is this. The law says to the labourer, "Caveat emptor." It does not protect him from sharp practice. There is no public opinion to which he can appeal. His sons drift away to the towns.

I was told once as a fact of an aged labourer who bound all his children *by an oath* never to bring up a boy to the land. Can any one wonder at it ?

Some months ago I read in a London paper that labourers from town did not get on with farming employers because they would not understand that " a farmer's word was his bond." That is where it is. If the labourer is taken round by a possible master to see a cottage, for instance, and disputes the great man's assertion or insists upon seeing it for himself, he " gives offence." He had better not take the place after that. If he takes things upon trust and finds that he has been done, he has practically no remedy. And the master is utterly unabashed.

Another thing is that country labourers are shy. To enter into sanitary details with a well-dressed man of dominant manners is extremely difficult to them. One came to me a year or so ago and asked me what he was to do. I can't enter into details. I think they would surprise you. He had been taken round, and the master had assured him on the subject with a comprehensive wave of the hand, " *That's all right.*" Of course, nothing could be done. He had been trapped.

I must pass very slightly over many things which combine to make the labourer's lot distasteful, void of savour, if not disgusting. I may mention (as I once wrote something on the subject that was met with a good deal of contradiction) that the immense, well-conducted farm of which I have spoken has, of course, swallowed up several considerable holdings, the residences on which—good sizable houses—are empty. There is no letting them. Gentlefolk of moderate means will not bury themselves in country villages. No one knows better than I do how very trifling is the difference to the labourers that the presence in a village of an independent family of small means can make. But it does make a difference, just as the presence of a decent passenger makes a difference to the crew of a merchant ship commanded by a brutal skipper. The passenger is powerless. But he sees, and the skipper knows it. I place the general and increasing absence of small gentry as a contributory cause of the distaste for the village life felt

by the labourer. There is no one to break the long *tête-à-tête* between master and man. *Except the parson.*

The labourer and the Church.—In speaking of the parson and the Church I tread on dangerous ground. Let me begin by saying that parsons are almost invariably good and well-meaning men. My charge against them may almost be summed up in a rustic joke. The sign of "The Farmer's Man" is not an uncommon one among village public-houses. The joke is that it ought to be taken down from the inn and hung up over the parsonage door. The parson is "the farmer's man." It can hardly be otherwise. According to the prevailing ecclesiastical theory, his object is to elevate the Church. The Church is to elevate the people. To do this, to give the Church the dominating influence necessary to her efficient action, the cordial co-operation of the leaders of the village world is indispensable. And it is not to be had for nothing. The payment made is simply this. The priest is to "pass by on the other side" while the farmer deals with the labourer. It is not his business to take a part in disputes. He is a man of peace—as far as his own village goes. His churchwardens are farmers. They are the Aaron and Hur who hold up the hands of Moses. So he conciliates them. He conciliates everybody of influence. He is perfectly civil to the publicans, whose very existence depends upon their success in making labourers steady sots. He has a friendly greeting for the grocer, and knows nothing of adulteration and short weight. It is very unfortunate that cottages should be so bad. Encroachments on village rights are not within his province. Sometimes his desire to be pleasing to the great men of his flock goes further. Labourers very seldom use forcibly descriptive expressions. The turnips their grandfathers fed on have got into their blood. Yet I heard of one who was moved to speech after listening to an address in which a parson exhorted a number of labourers to be properly grateful for the generosity of their masters. "It was enough," he said, "to make a dog sick." I have felt the same myself.

A man and his master fell out. "Go to the parson and

ask him what *he* thinks," said the master. "Why, you know, sir, what *he* would say," said the man.

I might go on. But I won't. Parsons are good men. But their very virtues keep the labourers down. They "seek peace and ensue it" at the cost of justice. Right and wrong are not merely the government and the opposition. Once admit party methods, and wrong infallibly prevails. It has prevailed. And the Church (like the man in Charles Lamb's celebrated thesis) "never knows it." She goes on. "I wonder you will still be talking, Signor Benedick. Nobody marks you." In a village nobody "marks" what the Church says.

We have all heard of Mithridates, the king of Pontus, who ate poison till he was poison-proof. So in "Hudibras," the "King of Cambay, whose daily food Is asp, and basilisk and toad." Well, an English village is saturated with religion until it is religion-proof. Everybody goes to church, immense pressure is brought to bear to get the old men and women confirmed, most people are communicants. And religion, as a rule of conduct or a motive power, is absolutely non-existent. Why?

The success of the Church is the extent to which she can command the attendance of the village at her services. That is gaugeable. The Church is the mill that, theoretically, grinds congregations into Christians. But there is something wrong with the machinery. They come out, not contrite, not "ground up," but exactly what they went in.

Let us look back. In 1846, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, can anything have been more horrible than the condition of the country labourer? That was the very time when the Oxford movement was in the first flush of its youthful energy. An immense deal was done—for the restoration of churches. Erroneous ideas about Gothic architecture were severely dealt with. But the clergy thought infinitely more of crocketts and finials than of cottages and cesspools. Five-and-twenty years later, at the time of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, it was exactly the same thing. The Church was contented that things should stay as they were. She saw no need of re-

form. It is said that she has undergone a complete change since : and the farmers also. What has brought about this wonderful, this *most* wonderful change ?

No explanation is given. Is it not strange that the labourer should not have shared in it ? He has sunk morally, it appears, while his spiritual guide and his kindly and tender employer have gone up. What is the natural inference ? That the two have (wittingly or not) joined forces to keep him down.

For many, many years the position of Moses lay open to the acceptance of the Church. All she had to do was to qualify by slaying an Egyptian or two, by ranging herself definitely on the side of the oppressed. But the fear of families, as Job says, is too much for her.

In the forties, as in the seventies, she stood like a hen with a brood of ducklings, clucking reprobation while her charge faced the Red Sea. It was only when assured that the passage could be made dry-foot that she timidly ventured over.

The labourer hears the parson denounce from the pulpit the vices he condones in the street. He sees him greet with perfect friendliness a wealthy man known to all as an impudent thief of village rights, or the owner of tenanted cottages hardly fit for pigs, or a glutton and a soaker whose example makes his labourers sots. And he draws the natural conclusion. The parson is the farmer's man. The law is against him, the master is against him, and the parson maintains a benevolent neutrality.

To sum up. The law is dreaded by the labourer, not regarded as a protector. It is administered by men who mostly belong to the class who set it in movement against him. The clergyman identifies himself socially with the same class. Any power of combination that labourers might possess is nullified by the insecurity of their tenure as cottagers. He has no one to turn to in trouble.

What has the labourer to regret in leaving his village ? Home ties have grown very weak. " The home " means, in rustic parlance, the beds and chairs and tables, " the bits of sticks " a family has got together. The tied cottage is no more to the labourer than a borrowed umbrella.

Village life is very dull. There is nothing communal in it. The school is the property of the parson and the managers, generally farmers. The poor have got to send their children. There their interest practically ceases. They want them to become half-timers as soon as possible, that is all. The Church gives them no interest. They have no voice in its management, and are fed with this doctrine or that as it pleases the patrons. At best, it represents to them the "circus" which Lord Salisbury said was more to their taste than a council.

The decay of the village band.—Sixty years ago music still survived in country villages. What killed it? The Church. The old church band was too independent for the clergyman of the Oxford movement. The "musicianers," as they were called, used to quarrel in an unseemly way. Disputes among the band were got rid of by something very like the summary process of the father who cuts his little boy's head off to cure him of toothache. The band was suppressed and a harmonium substituted. Away went fiddles and brass with the bass viol and the "old serpent" at their head into the limbo of the village past. (The old serpent was a brass instrument of mysterious convolution.) Music was promoted from the fireside to the schoolroom or the vicar's parlour, where the choir met for practice. The old fiddles were hung up and forgotten. Only the other day I was told by a lady of great musical accomplishment of an attempt she was making to get up a string band in a large parish. People laughed at her. How were poor people to buy violins? But nearly all the instruments wanted were there. In many poor families the old fiddles had been kept, though the art of playing had been utterly forgotten.

The intention of the clergy was admirable. A decorous worship, and the village boys brought under the influence of the Church. That is one side. On the other, the destruction of almost the last form of communal effort for a common end, the capture by "the powers that be" in a country parish, of a last little stronghold of the independence that has disappeared from our labouring population.

There are none such now ; the guns of the Church, directed by the landed interest, range unobstructed over a plain of dead and flat submission. Dissent ! Dissent pays homage at births and deaths and marriages. The chapel has little power to raise. The old Puritan spirit, in country villages at least, seems to have been squeezed out of it.

Co-operative stores.—What inducement is offered to the labourer to stay in the village ? I am told by a very competent authority that, reckoning quality and price, to deal at London stores is 25 per cent cheaper than to buy at the village shop. Besides, labourers are mostly in debt, and " beggars mustn't be choosers." That makes things still worse. The remedy, of course, is co-operation. But how are families to co-operate when neighbourhood is not permanent ? Besides which, mutual trust has perished with community of interest. It has been atrophied by want of exercise.

Half a dozen villagers might conceivably club together to let some lady, for instance, whom they all know, get them a side of the best bacon from the stores at the price they paid for the very worst at the shop, and divide it. She would certainly be accused of partiality, but *perhaps* not of absolute dishonesty. But to do such a thing among themselves would be out of the question.

Fixity of tenure must precede co-operation, and until co-operation is the rule the labourer will continue to be despoiled in every petty transaction of his existence. One attraction of the city for him is that there he gets more choice and better value for whatever little money he has. Whatever he may possibly regret in the " land of Egypt, the house of bondage," it is not the flesh-pots. A "penn'-'orth of fried fish " in Whitechapel is probably a tastier meal than the escaped ploughboy has ever put into his mouth.

Village schools.—What does the village school do with the brains entrusted to it ? Brains are valuable. The Yankees are teaching us that. Well, in one village school I know, with an average attendance of between eighty and

ninety, I cannot hear on inquiry that any lad educated there has risen in the last twenty years above the position of a mere labourer. Go to the town or stay in the village; it is all one. Schooling directed by the Church and the Land has naturally turned out the article wanted by the Church and the Land—men of low intelligence and no enterprize. There are no games, and there is none of the initiative that comes of games. There is no recreation ground, no village green. The 3,500 acres of the village are practically divided into three great farms, sprinkled with the remains of former smaller homesteads. There was in old times a recreation ground. Old men have told me of the backswording and wrestling that went on there. It was "absorbed" long ago, whether legally or illegally I know not.

Remedies.—To suggest remedies hardly comes within the limits of my subject. If I touch upon that I must be brief indeed. And every word may be a bone of contention. Well, the great farmer stops the way. No progress is possible as long as he dominates the situation. We must call into existence a class of small, independent cultivators, the natural growth of which will progressively thrust him off the track. Some small beginnings have been already made. The results show, I think, that the machinery provided by law (Agricultural Holdings Act, 1892—result, 700 or 800 acres) will not work. Local government has become the appanage of acres. Parish councils, rural district councils, county councils, they all represent the essence of landed interest in various degrees of concentration. And the classes that now enjoy a practical monopoly of the land will never efficiently help in dispossessing themselves.

Now, what part of England has the largest interest in the land of England's being made the most of? The country? Or the town? The town population is four to one of the country population. And a large proportion of the number represented by the one only lives by sufferance on the land. This is the case with almost the whole of agricultural labourers. The evils inflicted upon the great

majority by this insignificant minority are, I think, the following :—

1. Dearness of food arising from low productivity of land.
2. The burden of providing labour for country men. The land does not take her share of the task of finding employment for the working men of England, but shuffles it off upon the towns.
3. The consequent congestion of the towns.
4. The ruin of the country as the breeding-field which ought to keep up the vigour of the town populations.
5. The closing of the country to the towns, so that increased facilities of locomotion do not do anything like the good to the towns that they should.

The moral I draw is that the towns should claim the right of dictating to England the way in which the land should be put to profit. The great majority of the classes nearest the land, squires and farmers and parsons, are disqualified respectively by self-interest, by religious prejudice that scruples at anything that may lead to the mental enfranchisement of the poor, and by sheer sluggishness of intellect joined to a blind selfishness without parallel in any class of English society. The land and the labourer have hitherto been left to them. And we want a change of management.

I should like to say something of the last of the evils I have enumerated. The closing of the country to the towns.

Take a mechanic with 35s. a week. He wants country air. There is the bicycle and there is the beanfeast. One means dust, the other drink. If he is enterprizing, he will go down to Brighton or Ramsgate and change the asphalte of the streets for the asphalte of the promenade and a crowded park for a stretch of crowded sand. Lodgings are dear, so is food. He gets uncommonly little refreshment for the good money and the priceless holiday he throws away there. To go down and spend his three days in a country village never occurs to him. And rightly. But suppose it does. What is he to do ? Take lodgings in a cottage ? If he is a decent man it would turn his

stomach. In a beer-house? Hardly better. The food would be uneatable, the price calculated by his coat. At the lowest, it would be three times that at which he could feed himself well in London. What is he to do with himself? The park is closed, the downs warn him off with a threatening notice. "Farmer Blank," he is told, "doesn't like people trespassing in his fields." The churchyard or the bar-parlour, he may spend his day in either and welcome. Perhaps—not generally—there is a village green, with a goose or two. It is a fine evening, but there are no children at play. He asks. "Ay, the farmers get up a match at cricket among 'emselves once or twice i' summer." "Don't the boys play?" "Naw. Summon gied 'em a bat, but they bin and lost the ball."

He returns to London in despair and disgust.

Let us suppose thirty or forty small independent holders to have taken the place of three or four large farmers. From what we know of Denmark, Belgium, France, Holland, and of recent experiments in Ireland, we have reason to believe that co-operation will have largely taken the place of the individual struggle for life that now makes of an English village a den of hungry beasts. We may hope that in a few years villagers will have re-learnt the forgotten art of enjoyment. They will have learnt to feel with energetic conviction that the natural beauties that surround a village are the property of the village, as far as the *enjoyment* goes that neither does material damage nor interferes with other legitimate enjoyment. They will have learnt to believe that the maddest dog in England is the Dog in the Manger, and when such a one shows his nose in a village their belief will be very apt to take an active form.

Views are not damaged by being looked at; it does not spoil timber to sit in the shade of a tree; grass is little hurt by children's picking cowslips in cowslip time; blackberrying breaks few hedges.

A new village industry.—You here know better than I do to how many Londoners "each simple joy the country yields" would be an attraction and a real rest and refresh-

ment, if they could only come by them. I look forward to a time when the entertainment of London visitors will be one of the great industries of country villages. When the country will be to London what Switzerland is to Europe. When the communal guest-house will "do" a London visitor *well* for 2s. 6d. a day and night, and bring a handsome profit to the community. When relations of friendship will exist between townsmen and countrymen, and when the born rustic who happens to be a native of Whitechapel will quite naturally and easily take the place of the born Londoner who came into the world at Stogginton. When a girl going up to service in Town will find that she has there a circle of acquaintances made in the country, and holiday London, instead of swarming like bees to the treacle-pots of Ramsgate and Hastings, will scatter itself over the villages within a radius of fifty or sixty miles. A game of bowls under a tree is pleasanter than "Aunt Sally" on the sands; a stretch over high downs and sandwiches under a may-bush are better than the foulness of the sea beach at the great tripping places and the heart-sickening uniformity of the cheap restaurant.

London should remember that the restoration of the labourer to the land in the character of an independent peasant may mean to London the opening of several hundred places of enjoyment; to many thousands of Londoners, themselves only two or three generations away from the country, the reawakening of that natural love of fields and leaves which exists in them so strongly as children and is so terribly obscured as they grow up by the uncounteracted influences of the public-house and the music-hall. London should remember, too, that it is better that the country should send up to recruit her population young freemen, with a happy boyhood behind them, than heart-broken drudges escaping from a bitter servitude.

There is no making a Garden City of London. But the whole country within a radius of seventy or eighty miles may be made a garden of pleasaunce for Londoners to enjoy, with wrong to none, with infinite good to many, and to the general benefit of England.

Only—THE GREAT FARMER STOPS THE WAY.

III. STATE-AID FOR AGRICULTURE[1]

By T. S. DYMOND

Late Lecturer to the Essex County Council.

IN addressing meetings of farmers up and down the country, the late Minister of Agriculture, Mr. R. W. Hanbury, never failed to ask his audience in what direction they desired that "the Government should do more for Agriculture," but he never seems to have got a satisfactory reply except from those who advocated an import duty on corn.

As a matter of fact, "protection" does not assume an important position in the assistance given by the State to agriculture in Hungary. It is true that, owing to the *Zollverein* with Austria, there is a heavy import duty on corn, intended to protect the Hungarian farmers, but the farmers feel it to be a very doubtful advantage, because, while the Austrians would in any case buy the Hungarian wheat as the cheapest and best procurable, the import duty on agricultural machinery imposed to protect the Austrian machinists (which it fails to do) is to the Hungarians a grievous burden.

There is, however, a form of protection given in Hungary, as in all the sugar-beet growing countries of the Continent, to which special reference must be made, viz. the rebate on exported sugar, a grant so considerable that it makes it possible to sell Hungarian sugar in Great Britain for half the price it is retailed at in Hungary itself, because it pays the producers better to export their sugar than to sell it at home except at an absurdly high price. Hungary is almost a purely agricultural country, and practically the whole population is directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture. The farmers, then, are taxing themselves in

[1] *A Lecture to the Fabian Society, May,* 1903.

order to aid certain localities to grow sugar (localities which are limited in area, for sugar-beet growing demands a sugar factory in the immediate neighbourhood), and the whole population is, besides, paying an enormous price for this article of food. In spite, therefore, of certain advantages which the sugar-beet industry possesses, e.g. the large quantity of labour it necessitates and the value as cattle food of the refuse pulp, it only needed the countervailing duties on bounty-fed sugar recently imposed in India—formerly one of the best markets for Hungarian sugar—and the recommendations of the Brussels Convention, to cause the country to welcome the prospect of casting off a heavy burden.

From "protection" we may therefore pass to a description of other means of assistance afforded by the State in the direction of (*a*) agricultural education, (*b*) the scientific development of agriculture, and (*c*) the commercial development of agriculture.

It must first be explained that Hungary consists of a vast plain, surrounded by a great tract of hilly country, rising in places into stupendous mountain ranges, whose highest summits are never free from snow. The inhabitants are as diversified as the country, for the Magyars are quite outnumbered by immigrant Slavonic, Teutonic, or Latin races, all of them differing not only in dress, language, religion, and customs, but also in intelligence, ability, and inclinations.

With the exception of an insignificant minority engaged in mining, mechanical, or chemical industry, the whole population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. The farmers may be divided into three classes: (1) the magnates who farm their ten to fifty thousand acres; (2) the gentry with their five to fifteen hundred acres; and (3) the peasants who farm in holdings of less than 120 acres, just 50 per cent. of the whole of the cultivated land of the country (excluding forest). These peasant freeholds are for the most part between 8 and 120 acres in size, but in some parts of the country, owing to the Hungarian custom of dividing a property on the death of a father equally between his sons, the holdings through several

generations have become reduced to the size of a mere allotment of half an acre and upwards, an area far too small to maintain a peasant and his family, who are therefore obliged to eke out a livelihood by acting as labourers on the large estates and taking as payment, not wages in money, but a certain fixed proportion of the produce of their labour.

Agricultural education.—Excluding the means taken for elementary and secondary education, agricultural education is afforded by the following institutions :—

1. The Agricultural Academy at Magyaróvár, an institution which ranks with Hohenheim, Wageningen, and Copenhagen as one of the first of the agricultural colleges of the world, intended for those who are destined to fill the highest agricultural positions (average attendance, 157).

2. Four agricultural colleges, ranking with the very best of our own colleges, intended for the sons of the gentry or large farmers (average attendance at each, 125).

3. Twenty-one tillage schools, for the sons of peasant farmers, who receive a two-years' course of training in practical farming (average attendance at each, 26).

4. An immense number of winter schools of agriculture in the villages for the sons of peasants (total yearly attendance, 300,000).

5. Itinerant teaching by a staff of over 200 travelling lecturers and experts, attached for the most part to the staff of the Agricultural Ministry.

6. Educational institutions for special industries, including (1) a veterinary college, a huge and splendidly equipped institution ; (2) an arboricultural college and four schools for foresters ; (3) a dairy high-school and four schools for dairymen and women ; (4) a horticultural college and five schools for gardeners ; (5, 6, and 7) a poultry-farming, a bee-farming, and a meadow culture school ; and (8) a viticultural course and eight schools for vine dressers.

7. Eighty model peasant farms in the respective counties, each equipped with the implements and stock considered most suitable for the district, and five great State farms which, while primarily intended for other purposes,

also serve for education and demonstration, and to which parties of farmers are carried by the railways at reduced fares from all over the country.

8. The great agricultural museum at Budapest.

The whole of this enormous scheme is supported and in most cases maintained by the State. Every year further developments take place, old institutions are enlarged and new institutions built, and the policy of the Government clearly is not to wait till the demand becomes imperative, but, by the provision of the fullest facilities for instruction, to encourage the people to take advantage of it. In this, as in every other agricultural development in Hungary, the Government leads the way and the people follow.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the details of teaching or equipment, or to dwell upon the marvellous collections in the museums, which possess of themselves an educational value I could never have believed had I not conducted a party of farmers through them and found how intensely interesting from a practical standpoint did they find the contents; but one important feature must be clearly impressed—that in every institution for higher teaching, and even those intended for the training of peasant farmers, education is associated with research, it being realized that, for the future of agriculture to be prosperous, it is important not only to teach the students what is known already, but to impress upon their minds, by this association, how incomplete is our knowledge and how much remains to be discovered.

Scientific development.—This brings us, then, to the means taken by the State for the scientific development of agriculture by experimental and research work. The whole of this is under the control of a Departmental Central Committee, on which all branches of the work are represented, and the purpose of which is to encourage and control the harmonious working of the stations (and thus to prevent duplication and overlapping), to direct what experiments are to be carried out, to advise the Minister of Agriculture in what direction development is required, and to publish the results in the form of bulletins. The following is a

brief description of the stations under the control of this Committee :—

1. The Geological Institute at Budapest makes a scientific study of the soil in relation to agriculture, and publishes maps.

2. The National Institute for Meteorology possesses an observatory, and issues weather forecasts daily to the press, institutes, subscribers, and about 400 telegraph offices in rural districts, telegraphs rainfall statistics with the object of providing means to prevent the flooding of agricultural land in districts subject to inundation, and promotes defence against gales.

3. The National Chemical Institute and Experiment Station undertakes the analysis and control of fertilizers, feeding stuffs, etc., with a view to prevent adulteration. There are also chemical experiment stations connected with the Academy at Magyaróvár and at each of the four agricultural colleges before mentioned.

4. The Bacteriological Institute in connection with the Veterinary College at Budapest carries on defence against swine fever and other contagious diseases, and prepares and distributes mallein and tuberculin.

5. The Central Seed-testing Station at Budapest and those in connection with each of the Agricultural Colleges and the Agricultural Academy at Magyaróvár undertake the control of seeds and feeding stuffs with the object of preventing adulteration ; they carry on experiments with a view to developing fertility, feeding, value etc. ; and they diffuse a knowledge of weed seeds and defence against weeds and plant parasites. Some 40,000 examinations are made annually.

6. The Experiment Station for Agricultural Implements at Magyaróvár examines all new machinery introduced and advises farmers as to its value.

7. The Experiment Station for Plant-breeding in Magyaróvár has for its object the improvement of species, the acclimatization of new species, the improvement of pastures, and the diffusion of knowledge on the rational manuring of crops. A part of this work is carried out in conjunction with farmers who in consideration of the free supply of manure or seed agree to undertake the work, but the

experiments requiring more accurate observation are arranged in conjunction with the other agricultural colleges, identical experiments being thus made in several parts of the country.

8. The Entomological Station at Budapest has for its object to obtain and disseminate information regarding insects injurious in agriculture and the means of defence against them, and in urgent cases to undertake the defence. Correspondents are appointed in different parts of the country.

9. The Tobacco Experiment Station in connection with the Agricultural College at Debreczen is established with the object of counteracting the decline of tobacco culture during recent years, by improving the quality, productiveness, proper cultivation, and generally increasing the profitableness of its culture.

10. The Experiment Station for Plant Physiology and Pathology at Magyaróvár has chiefly occupied itself up to the present with the investigation of a disease in sugar-beet; the cause of this disease and the remedies having now been fully ascertained, it is now carrying on experiments on smut, rust, and other fungoid diseases of corn.

11. The Experiment Station for Feeding of Cattle at Budapest has for its object to ascertain the most economical feeding stuffs grown in Hungary for the breeds of cattle produced in the country, i.e. to apply the results of German and American experiments to Hungarian conditions.

12. The Experimental Wool-sorting Station at Budapest was established with the hope of counteracting the very serious decline in sheep breeding and wool production in the country.

13. The Ornithological Station at Budapest has mainly in view the protection of wild birds useful in agriculture, and publishes popular well-illustrated works on the subject to the general public, and to farmers in particular.

14. The Experimental Station for Brewing at Kassa has the general aim of developing the industry.

Such is the programme of scientific work carried on by, and at the entire cost of, the State.

Commercial development.—In the commercial development of the agriculture of Hungary we find that the

State takes a much more leading part than in most Continental countries. The grants made for the reclamation of land, the loans given to the agricultural credit banks, and the appointment of agricultural commissioners in foreign capitals, have their counterparts in many countries, but, in Hungary, beyond all this, the State does not hesitate to foster, by direct financial aid, farming in any depressed part of the country, or any branch of agricultural industry that is capable of development. And it should here be mentioned that Hungarian Governments have not been afraid to embark on industrial enterprise themselves, for to the State now belong the principal railways; it is the owner of silk, hemp, flax, sugar, and many other factories in connection with the State farms, it is proprietor of the world-renowned baths of Hercules and the delightful pleasure resorts of the Northern Carpathians, and it owns and manages 3,700,000 acres of forest. But besides this the State farms, and farms to the highest possible advantage, 163,466 acres of land in its five great stud farms, farms which not only serve as models to the whole country of what farming ought to be, not only serve to produce the best stallions, the best bulls, the best seed for distribution through the country, and thus in the most effectual way tend to the improvement of stock, but which also yield a revenue to the State of £300,000 a year.

I propose now to give examples of the means adopted.

To assist the farmers in districts hardest hit by agricultural depression, seed wheat, seed potatoes, linseed, etc., are distributed at low cost, or in deserving cases absolutely free. Potatoes being an important crop in these districts, special inducements are held out for the establishment of small distilleries, the excise giving peculiar advantages to these distilleries, and the State railway conveying, when the potato crop fails, maize for distilling from other districts at exceptionally low rates.

To encourage the cultivation of malting barley in districts suitable for barley growing, good seed is grown on, and distributed from, the State farms in exchange for seed grown by the farmers, grants are made for the establishment of annual barley fairs, and a rebate of about 20 per

cent. is given by the State railways on the rates for carriage of malting barley for export.

To encourage silkworm culture, a home industry carried on, it is said, by the families of 100,000 peasants in the country, the State has established and owns 145 nurseries, at which several million mulberry trees are propagated yearly, a silkworm breeding station for providing and distributing the eggs, twenty-four cocooneries for collecting the silk, and five silk factories.

Flax, hemp, and hop culture are encouraged by grants towards the establishment of depots or markets, and by special reduced rates on the State railway.

Agricultural co-operation in the collection, manipulation, and marketing of agricultural produce, which is an important factor in the agricultural development of Hungary, has received the powerful encouragement of the State, firstly, by the distribution of co-operative literature, and, secondly, by direct grants in aid of co-operative enterprises. Such grants have been made to the Farmers Market Hall Supply Co-operative Society in order to enable them to start the systematic collection and marketing of eggs; to the co-operative dairies to aid their formation; to the Central Co-operative Distributing Society, to enable it to start co-operative stores in the villages in congested districts; and to the National Co-operative Society of Hungarian Wine Growers, in the form of the free use of wine cellars beneath the Board of Agriculture in Budapest. Lastly, a grant is given to the county agricultural societies, co-operative organizations as many of these are, amounting in 1901 to £8,270, to encourage and assist them in their invaluable labours for the development of agriculture in their respective counties.

The co-operative credit movement has also had the powerful support of the State. "In order to facilitate and control the co-operative popular credit movement" (I quote from the recently issued report of the Minister of Agriculture upon the work done by his department during his five years term of office) "the Legislature passed a special Act in 1898 on the agricultural and industrial credit banks, under which a part of the shares were subscribed

by the Exchequer, a part by the already existing co-operative credit societies, and the remainder, at the request of the Minister of Agriculture, by some of the large landowners. Since that time the central bank, so founded, has been very satisfactory as a working institution, and has helped the department in every way connected with local agricultural co-operation. The local branches in 1902 numbered 1,566, with 317,851 members.

"The action of the Department since starting the central bank has been practically limited to helping the formation of local banks which, situated in the economically worst parts of the country, cannot start themselves without assistance. The grant is limited to some hundreds of crowns. The greater number of these are situated in the congested districts of the north-eastern part of the country. The Department being anxious to form these co-operative banks in order to emancipate the poor farmers from the local money lenders" (Polish Jews who charged, I may interpolate, 20, 30, or even 40 per cent on loans, and who have been reduced to a condition of most miserable penury by the loss of their business), "not only strongly advocates the system, but being a local landowner everywhere itself, subscribes a part of the shares and deposits money. These banks in the neglected parts of the country combine credit-giving with store-keeping."[1]

It may be added to this account of the Minister that in connection with some of the local credit banks co-operative granaries have been established, a system which has a special advantage in Hungary, as it is there the custom for the buyer to travel from farm to farm purchasing corn, at his own price, from the farmers.

Having given some examples of the aid given by the State towards the commercial development of agriculture in Hungary, I propose now to deal somewhat more generally with certain typical branches of agriculture which have received State support on educational and scientific as well as commercial lines. An important point that is

[1] The whole report has since been translated by Mr. Andrew György and published under the title "The State and Agriculture in Hungary," Macmillan, 1908, 5/- net.—EDITOR.

probably already self-evident should be borne in mind in considering what follows, viz. that in Hungary it is the deliberate intention of the Government to take the initiative in every forward movement, and by doing so and by granting aid to obtain control. The branches of agriculture I shall deal with are fruit culture, stock breeding, and forestry.

Fruit culture.—The climate of Hungary is eminently suitable for fruit, but up to the nineties the imports very nearly equalled the exports. Attention had been drawn during the previous decade to the suitability of the sandy and almost barren districts of the plain for fruit culture, because vineyards had been successfully started upon them to replace the mountain vineyards devastated by the phylloxera. Steps were therefore taken to utilize these districts for the development of fruit culture.

With this object in view, the first step taken by the Department was to decide what fruits and what varieties were suitable for cultivation in each district. Lists were then drawn up and sent to the agricultural colleges and the orchards on the State farms.

The next step was the planting of a number of nurseries in different parts of the country for propagating the varieties of fruit decided upon, and the forestry stations were utilized for cultivating the proper stocks for grafting. Between 1892 and 1901 twenty-five State orchards were established altogether.

Next there followed the distribution and sale at very low charges of the fruit trees, fruit seedlings, wild fruit stocks, and grafted stocks thus propagated. To schoolmasters and clergymen fruit trees were given free, as also the seedlings and fruit stocks to the nurseries of parishes and agricultural and horticultural associations, who were required to supply fruit trees for planting the highways. In 1901 as many as 378,000 grafted stocks and over 2,000,000 seedlings were thus distributed. Even this vast number proved insufficient for the demand, and, to further increase the supply, prizes were given to those schoolmasters who in the parochial orchards produced the greatest number of grafted stems, and plum trees, being

more useful to poor farmers than anything else, were imported from Orleans and Angers to the number of 600,000.

Meanwhile steps were taken to provide the necessary instruction in fruit culture. The great horticultural school was established on the slopes of the Gellert Hill at Budapest for systematic, theoretical, and practical instruction. For orchard labourers four country schools of fruit culture were founded, in addition to which the State orchards served for their practical training. An industrial school at Budapest was made purely horticultural. The winter schools of agriculture in the villages for sons of peasant farmers were required to include fruit culture in their curricula, teachers of fruit culture were appointed to secondary and other schools, encouragement was given to schoolmasters in teaching the subject in the parochial schools by offering prizes to their pupils, courses of lectures were arranged for the road surveyors who would have the care of the fruit trees upon the highways, and courses of fruit growing were arranged for all schoolmasters and for a few clergy (for the clergy in Hungary, as in every country, are the best pomologists), of whom 172 applied for the twelve places offered! Lastly, the Department published a weekly paper, "The Fruit Gardener," and several treatises and popular pamphlets.

Finally came the question of the marketing and export of the produce. And here comes the advantage of the control that had been exercised in only encouraging the cultivation of a few kinds of fruit, the production of small lots of many kinds being the worst hindrance to an export trade. Grants were given to encourage the formation of local fruit shows, and of co-operative fruit marketing societies. Willow plantations for basket-making were started on the State farms, and gifts of willow seedlings made to parishes together with grants to enable them to prepare the land for willow plantations. Special low rates were charged by the State railway for export fruit, and reports upon the demand for fruit in Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and Scandinavia obtained from the respective consuls. For unsold fresh fruit the State began to hire out machines for cider making, spirit distilling, and

fruit drying to parishes and co-operative associations, and sometimes to give them free, and grants were made towards building two fruit-drying factories.

Stock breeding and dairying.—Equally comprehensive is the aid given by the State in these branches of agriculture, and also intensely interesting because the State itself farms 163,466 acres of land in the five great estates which serve for the production of the pure-bred stock which is distributed through the country with the object of improving the various breeds.

The aim of the Government is that a particular breed of horses or cattle should be bred by the farmers in a particular district, the object being to keep the breeds pure, to economize sires, and to enable buyers to know to what particular district they must go to purchase what they want. With this aim in view, each State farm breeds a particular class of horses or cattle; for each district of Hungary the Government decides upon the breed most suitable for encouragement, and the county councils publish particulars to the farmers as to where sires of this breed may be obtained.

With regard to horses no expense is spared; £125,000 is spent yearly in the interests of horse breeding. The stables at Kisbér contain some of our best English thoroughbreds purchased at almost fabulous prices, and fresh batches of pure-bred Arab horses are fetched from Arabia every year. The number of registered stallions owned by the State and hired out for public service at fees of from 6s. to 10s. is 3,100, which in 1901 covered as many as 119,114 mares, and in addition to these are 200 stallions hired out to private breeders. So strict is the control that a sire belonging to a private owner must not be used by his neighbours unless registered.

The management of the studs is admirable. All are under military control, and the men of the cavalry regiments serve their three years upon the farms, thus not only saving the State a heavy bill for labour, but learning all there is to know about horse breeding and gaining knowledge which they are able to turn to useful account on returning to their own farms or holdings. The policy of

the country in this respect seems to be abundantly justified, for nothing is so astonishing as the excellence of the horses bred by the small holders, who in one small village I visited were able to produce some fifty or sixty horses, any one of which would have looked well in Rotten Row. In any part of the Great Plain good post horses can be had. I think the most vivid impression that any one who has travelled in Hungary will bring back is driving over that limitless expanse behind a pair of Hungarian horses, on and on, mile after mile, now racing madly along the soft unmetalled roads, mere cart tracks, canopied in a cloud of dust, or sweeping dustless over trackless turf.

Similar steps are taken for the development of cattle breeding. The whole country is divided into twenty districts, to each of which an inspector is appointed, who possesses such powers as will enable him to induce farmers to develop their business in the direction approved by the Department. Every year an immense number of good bulls are sold from the State farms, generally to the parishes or village communities, a tax being raised by the parish council for the purchase, the bulls being thereafter available for the use of any farmer living in the parish. In 1901 3,428 bulls were thus distributed. Stock markets are also organized and prizes for the best cattle given, the grant for this purpose amounting in 1901 to £3,300.

Particular attention is paid to dairy cattle. The native Hungarian cattle being primarily draught cattle, a large number of the best stock from Alpine herds of dairy cattle are annually imported for breeding purposes (325 in 1901). The dairying industry, as already mentioned, is assisted by five Government dairy schools and by direct grants to the co-operative dairies. So remarkable has been the development of the dairying industry since the first co-operative dairy was started in 1895, that the excess of exports over imports of dairy produce has increased from £57,000 in 1895 to £486,000 in 1901, an increase of more than eightfold.

Equally striking are the results of the fostering care of the State in the poultry industry. A State poultry farm and school has been started on the Crown estate of Gödöllö, and here the most suitable breeds are reared. These are

distributed in a remarkable way—the cock birds are exchanged with the farmers for common poultry, as many as 7,666 cock birds being exchanged in 1901; the same system applies to eggs for hatching. Still more has been done in conjunction with the Market Hall Supply Co-operative Society by establishing local egg-collecting stations, mostly in connection with the local co-operative dairies. By systematic sorting of the eggs, and by the elimination of the German middlemen, the price obtained by the farmers for exported eggs has been raised 30 or 40 per cent, and the export of poultry and eggs increased in five years by 80 per cent.

Another form of State-aid in stock breeding is the steps taken to eliminate contagious disease. Strict isolation regulations are imposed to prevent the spread of swine fever. A serious outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in 1893 was dealt with by the wholesale slaughter of the animals in infected yards, compensation being given in full, as many as 20,942 cattle being slaughtered in 1894 and £37,000 paid in compensation, measures which were entirely successful in stamping out the disease.

Forestry.—There is one other State-aided branch of agriculture to which reference must be made on account of its importance to this country—namely, forestry. The part of the report of the Minister of Agriculture that deals with this subject is somewhat apologetic. It points out that while the aid given is to the material benefit of the proprietor, it is also directly to the benefit of the nation, because (1) forest provides an article of national wealth which is in permanent readiness, (2) it promotes health, (3) it has a favourable climatical influence, and (4) it provides the raw material of a vast number of industries without recourse to import, besides which there is a vast amount of land in Hungary which it is otherwise impossible to render productive, and of which part, while barren, is an absolute danger to the surrounding districts. It is concluded that State-aid to the proprietors of such land is perfectly legitimate, both because it is to the public benefit, and because the afforestation cannot be remunerative for some years to the proprietors.

An Act was passed in 1879 which made it compulsory to afforest formerly deforested and now barren land, and it prevented the deforesting of land, which could not otherwise be profitably cultivated, unless an equal portion of barren land were afforested at the same time.

The State affords aid in this direction by establishing a central experiment station for forestry, four schools for foresters, and nurseries for forest trees in connection with each of the foresters' schools. From these nurseries seedlings are distributed free to proprietors, as many as 358,000,000, it is said, having been distributed between 1874–1901. Proprietors can, if they wish, give over to State management the land that they are compelled to afforest. The State also sometimes buys forest land, for example as a national pleasure resort or to prevent foreigners from acquiring large tracts for sporting purposes.

Labour.—Owing to American competition and consequent low prices of agricultural produce on the one hand, and to abundance of labour due to completion of public works and the introduction of labour-saving machinery on the other, the wages of agricultural labourers in the beginning of the nineties fell to a very low figure. The disaffection produced was accentuated by the working of an Act of 1876, disadvantageous to themselves as the agricultural labourers considered it to be, which imposed between farmer and labourer the necessity of contracts in all cases, and which required that agricultural labourers should be able to produce certificates of efficiency in certain cases, which certificates there seems to have been difficulty in procuring. Encouraged by the Social Democratic Party, the labourers secretly determined, in order to secure higher wages, to refuse to perform their contracts with the farmers as soon as the harvest in 1897 was begun. The Department conceiving that its duty was to aid the farmers to get in the harvest where actual contracts had been made, made ample preparation, chiefly by providing some thousands of labourers from the State stud farms and forests, and, although the strike was very widespread and the feeling aroused very bitter, harvesting operations were eventually safely performed.

The result of the strike was to strengthen the demand for revision of the Act of 1876, and the Department therefore promoted an Amending Act in 1898, the object of which was to facilitate the smooth working of the 1876 Act. There was an attempt to revive the strike in the summer of 1898, but it failed, partly owing to the same steps being taken by the Department to meet the emergency as in the previous year, and partly because the Department had included in the Amending Act a clause for facilitating the distribution of certificates, and a clause for establishing a labour bureau for the efficient interchange of labourers, and so equalizing the supply and demand in the various districts, in order to prevent the superabundant supply of labour in any district and the consequent lowering of wages. Under this clause every parish council must nominate a person to keep a list of employers and employed in the parish. Any surplus in supply or demand must be reported to the county council, who draws up weekly reports, which are sent back to the parishes on the one hand and to the central bureau on the other. This system of interchange between parishes or districts seems to work thoroughly well; it is further facilitated by a reduction of 50 per cent on the railway fares for labourers travelling to their work in another district and home again.

Simultaneously with this reform, the Department began to take measures for bettering the circumstances of the labourers. They began to establish popular libraries for labourers (there are now 1,068), to give grants to clergy and schoolmasters to enable them to establish reading-rooms, friendly societies, etc., and to give rewards to those clergy and schoolmasters who had been most successful in their labours. They award prizes to the labourers for efficient performance of their work (some 1,279 have been awarded), and yearly distribute 400 diplomas as a permanent recognition that the State recognizes their conscientious work and fidelity. Through the request of the Department, the agricultural societies recommenced in 1899 the old harvest feasts in order to promote the mutual interest of farmers and labourers in each other, and lastly the Department issues a popular weekly paper for labourers,

the circulation of which amounts to 43,000 copies, and which is published in Hungarian, Slovac, German, Roumanian, Servian, and Ruthenian. The total grant made by the Department from 1898 to 1902 towards bettering the condition of the labourers amounts to £66,000.

The last Act promoted by the Department for the benefit of the labourer (xvi., 1900) established a fund for insurance against accident, sickness, and old age, an Act of which the labourers, or their employers on their behalf, have eagerly availed themselves.

Application to Great Britain and Ireland.—With regard to education in, and the scientific development of, agriculture there is, with little exception, nothing done in Hungary which we cannot parallel in our own country. But the great difference is that, whereas in Hungary the systems adopted are applied to the whole country, with us there is, with the single exception of the control of contagious disease in farm stock, absolutely no general systematization whatever. In my own county farmers can have their sons given an agricultural education, can have field experiments carried out on their own class of land, the object of which is the increase in quantity and improvement in quality of their agricultural produce, and can control, by having analysis made, the manures, feeding stuffs, and seeds that they buy; but in the adjoining county they have no such privileges, and they are debarred from ours. It is the system of decentralization, of remitting to the county councils the responsibility of agricultural education, under which title almost all scientific development of agriculture is now carried on in this country, that is the difficulty in the way of the systematic application of any scheme to the whole country. The great variation in different parts of our country necessitates, of course, very different treatment, but the time must surely soon come when the experimental period of agricultural education has proved what the right treatment for each part of the country is, and every county should be persuaded to carry out its share of the work. *How* the systematization should be carried out, what counties should be grouped for the purpose, what means of per-

suasion should be adopted, and whether by the Board of Education or Board of Agriculture, is not my purpose to inquire. The Board of Agriculture has led the way in attempting to systematize the field experiments throughout the country and has utilized the Agricultural Education Association—an association of agricultural professors and teachers—in carrying out the scheme, and this small beginning may be the beginning of a far-reaching movement.

Next, with regard to the *commercial* development of agriculture, it must be remembered that the prosperity of a country devoid of colonies chiefly depends upon the prosperity of its industry, and that in Hungary agriculture is the only important industry. It is quite certain that the policy adopted has been a gigantic success, and that the country is going ahead by leaps and bounds as a direct consequence. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the knowledge that the State is ready to initiate any developments required discourages private enterprize. There is already a feeling of dissatisfaction abroad, a feeling of the powerlessness of individuals to develop an industry without State interference, that the initiative in any forward movement must come from the Government, and a feeling of resentment at the restraint and control which it is evident is and must be exercised by the State whenever State-aid is given.

And if there is this growing feeling against State-aid and interference (the two terms are almost interchangeable) in a nation so uncommercial and so primitive in many respects as the Hungarians, how much stronger would the feeling be with us. Our English farmers are intensely commercial; the barterings at the weekly market, the sale of corn by a farmer at 6d. a quarter better than his neighbour or the purchase of seed at 6d. less, is the bright spot in an otherwise monotonous existence, and all wish of sharing with others the advantages of a profit-sharing and co-operative undertaking is absent from a farmer's breast. I do not think that the farmers whom I accompanied to Hungary will ask again that the Government should do more for agriculture; they are rather imbued

with the idea that it is better to have too little State-aid than too much.

The commercial development of agriculture in this country is slowly but surely taking place as the result, not of State-aid, but of better education, and the development would take place far more quickly if agricultural education were better systematized in the whole country.

In certain directions, however, I believe that the example of Hungary might be advantageously followed. Strict laws should be enforced against deforesting. The deforesting of land in the Eastern Counties during the great corn years was a perfect calamity, for the land that was originally woodland was always the poorest land, and is quite unremunerative to cultivate in any other way. The afforesting of this land might well receive some encouragement, and the same may be said of enormous tracts in Scotland and Ireland, the afforesting of which would in a number of ways be to the inestimable advantage of the nation.

Again, the county agricultural societies and chambers of commerce might well be encouraged to develop in a commercial direction, perhaps by establishing depots for agricultural produce where the means for its disposal are defective, or studs for the sake of facilitating horse-breeding by the farmers, and especially by organizing agricultural labour bureaux in connection with a central bureau in London, which might possibly remedy the scarcity of labour, the greatest of all drawbacks to successful intensive farming in the home counties.

There can be no doubt, too, that credit banks would be a boon to the farmers in every part of the country.

It is, of course, manifest that Ireland needs entirely different treatment. The Irish and Hungarian temperament is not unlike in some respects. The Department of Agriculture in Dublin appears to be fully alive to the possibilities. Already it has adopted several means, similar to those adopted by the Hungarian Department of Agriculture, to foster the commercial development of the country, and there is every reason to believe that it will be equally successful.

IV. THE REVIVAL OF AGRICULTURE

A NATIONAL POLICY FOR GREAT BRITAIN

By THE FABIAN SOCIETY

THE decline of agriculture in Great Britain began about thirty years ago. The bad harvests of 1876–82 caused widespread ruin, while in the same period the introduction of very cheap ocean transport and the extension of agriculture in America and elsewhere led to a tremendous fall in prices. According to the Board of Trade figures, the fall in 1898–1902, compared with 1871–5, has been 37.7 per cent in corn, and 18.1 per cent in meat, bacon, and dairy produce. The effect on incomes derived from land has been catastrophic. The landlord's share, the gross annual value of lands assessed to income-tax under Schedule A (including tithe rent charge, ornamental gardens, gardens exceeding one acre, farmhouses and buildings, etc.) fell in Great Britain from £59,568,253 in 1879–80 to £42,507,895 in 1902–3. The average reduction in rent has thus been 28.5 per cent, but in some localities the fall has been as much as 60 per cent. The fall in the value of the fee simple is about the same, and small and encumbered owners have suffered most. Farmers' capital was largely swept away in the early years of the decline, and even now they have to live close and can save but little. The estimated amount of farmers' profits fell in Great Britain from £28,405,086 in 1879–80 to £14,288,974 in 1902–3, or one-half. Agricultural labourers alone have gained during the last thirty years; but although the average weekly earnings in England are now 18s. 3d., there is, according to the estimates made by Mr. Wilson Fox, of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, "a deficit of 2s. 0½d., if the value of food, the cost of rent, firing, light, clothes, and club is compared with the earnings of the head of the family (without allowing for any

expenditure on beer, tobacco, and household requisites)." The balance must be made good from the earnings of wife and children, from the garden, the poultry, or the pig.

Between 1871 and 1904 arable land in Great Britain has decreased by 3,122,000 acres, and permanent pasture has increased 4,668,000 acres. There has been a great change from corn raising to cattle rearing and dairy farming, with less employment of labour. Simultaneously imports have increased enormously, not only in grain and meat, but also in dairy produce, eggs, poultry, etc., where we might have hoped to hold our own.

The sins of the landlords.—The landlord system must bear a large share of the blame for the decay of agriculture. The bad times found many landlords with burdened estates and no reserve, saved in prosperous times, wherewith to keep their property in a state of efficiency. Placed in the position of the social and economic leaders of the rural districts, they have, as a class, largely devoted themselves to drawing their rents and trying to escape public burdens. They have not compelled their tenants to be good farmers; in fact, by obstructive rules and by annual tenancies, they have often prevented improvements. They have not stood between the agricultural labourers and their employers; on the contrary, by neglecting to provide a sufficient supply of sanitary cottages, they have powerfully contributed towards the rural exodus. Locally they have misused their economic strength for political and sectarian ends; while nationally they have set up a false ideal before the nation. To-day they still draw about £43,000,000, or three times the farmers' profits, from the land of Great Britain, with, as the evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture showed, disastrous results to the nation. "The evidence goes to show that over renting (1) has been a chief cause of depression in bringing farmers to ruin, and in deteriorating the condition of the land; (2) is even now very general; and (3) that the opinion that further reductions are necessary and inevitable is, among farming witnesses, practically universal. . . . There is much evidence to show that reductions are by no means universal, and that in many districts and

on many estates the system of temporary remissions or abatements, sometimes wholly insufficient to meet the times, is still common. In many cases, even in districts where depression is general, there would seem to have been neither reductions nor abatements of any kind." (Royal Commission on Agriculture Minority Report, F. A. Channing, M.P.) The main work of administration is done by a private service of estate agents, bailiffs, and foremen; and the landlord is a mere parasite on the industry of the country. As a class landlords have failed in their duty as "captains of industry," and it is only fitting that they should be swept aside to make room for some better system.

The faults of the farmers.—Farmers, as a body, have shown a great lack of that capacity and adaptability with which men in other occupations have met bad times. They have clung to the old idea that wheat growing was their only duty, and stubbornly resisted every attempt to persuade or coax them into better business methods. By sweating their labourers and vexing them with petty tyrannies, they drove them to the towns as soon as the way became open. If the blame lies mainly with a past generation, the present is not exempt. "Farmers rarely welcome new ideas," says Mr. Rider Haggard. To their inaction is due much of our dependence on foreign lands for food. Mr. R. E. Turnbull, the agricultural expert, says[1]: "Fully fifty per cent of the cattle marketed for beef in this country are of second or third quality, and whilst cattle of the best quality have given fairly remunerative prices for the food they have consumed, second quality cattle have seldom helped to improve the banking account. Third quality cattle, which probably formed one-eighth of the whole supply, have invariably caused a serious loss to the farmers who have bred them or fed them for beef. . . . Foreign competition can be successfully met alone by farmers who produce household foods of the best quality. There is vast room for improvement in fully half the herds and flocks in this country." In butter the British farmer cannot, price for price, supply the same quality as the

[1] Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 5th Series, Vol. XV., 1903.

foreigner, while he has made no serious attempt to raise the large quantities of eggs, poultry, fruit, and vegetables demanded by our population. Even in milk, where he has a monopoly, he supplies only 16½ gallons per head of population yearly.

It is not denied that there are many capable farmers, just as there are some good landlords; but there are not enough of either class to go round. Nor is it questioned that in the best qualities of produce and cattle we more than hold our own. Nevertheless, our agriculture has not kept pace with the growth of our population; and in all the great mass products our farmers are beaten out of the field by the abundant cheap supplies from abroad, in many cases mainly because they have neglected the business side of their occupation, the marketing of their produce.

Aims of the State.

1. UTILIZATION OF NATIONAL RESOURCES.

In presence of the failure of private enterprize as applied to agriculture the case for State intervention is complete. The objects which we must keep before us are several. Firstly, there is the utilization of the land as a part of the national resources at present allowed to run to waste. That we can ever become completely independent of foreign-grown food is probably impossible, yet that is no reason for not using to the full the resources which we possess. Cheap food is certainly welcome, but we cannot accept an economic situation which, if allowed to develop to its logical outcome, would lead to the abandonment of agriculture in Great Britain. The fertility of our soil is undoubted, and the quality of our products, when equal care is given, is not behind that of our competitors. The spectacle of untilled land in the country and unoccupied men in the towns is an indication of great material and intellectual waste.

2. INCREASE OF AGRICULTURAL POPULATION.

In the second place, we wish to maintain and increase our agricultural population. There is no evidence that the people has degenerated from a state of physical excel-

lence in the remote past when no statistics were kept, and there is proof that the health of the towns has vastly improved from what it was half a century ago. On the other hand, it is certain that at present the conditions of life in towns are much more injurious to health than those in the country. However much may be done by better sanitation, shorter hours of work, and more reasonable forms of enjoyment, it is certain that for a long time to come factory towns and the working-class quarters in all large towns must continue to be undesirable places to live in. Even under highly improved conditions they must be defective in air and sunlight, and particularly disadvantageous to children. It is probable that in the future this will be altered, and that the working-classes will live in healthy suburbs at a distance from their places of work—that, in the current phrase, the towns will be "spread over the country." But it is not probable that this development will be achieved within that period of time for which as wise politicians we must look forward in framing a policy. Without, therefore, deciding on the abstract merits of town and country life, or trying to determine what degree of suburbanity will carry the maximum of welfare, we must lay our plans for strengthening in the national interest in that section of our population which at present contains the greatest elements of health. Between 1851 and 1901 the number of adult males engaged in agriculture has fallen from 1,140,898 to 749,805, although one would have expected that the practical elimination of female labour (where there was a fall from 436,174 to 52,459) and the great decline in the employment of males under twenty (from 327,615 to 186,076)—both of these being healthy developments—would have to be compensated by an increase in the number of men. Naturally some uneasiness has been aroused, both on grounds of national health and because the loss of one great element of variety in national life is threatened. To find a solution for this part of our problem is by no means easy, for it involves the task of making agricultural life as attractive to the working-man as industrial life in cities. It involves something more than this; the apathy and stolidity which characterize the

agricultural labourer to-day—the evil effects of his life of isolation—must be removed. While we desire an increase of the agricultural population, we equally desire that the agricultural worker of the future should be very different, intellectually and morally, from the agricultural labourer whom we know.

A twenty-five years' policy.—In sketching out a national policy in agriculture, it is necessary not to take short views. A quarter of a century has passed since the "good times of 1875," during which the problem has become desperate. We must look forward to at least twenty-five years' work before we can achieve a revolution to prosperity. In proportion as the issues are great, so is the task of reform difficult. This necessity of working over a lengthened period imposes a double character on our policy. While, on the one hand, we must seek out the proper means of reorganizing agriculture, we must, on the other, take steps to ameliorate the existing order of things during the time which must elapse before it is replaced by a better. In that way what is good in existing modes will have an opportunity of surviving and developing according to its capability, and from its fate we shall derive guidance for our other plans. Since this improved present order will be the milieu in which our more revolutionary schemes will operate, the methods of amelioration must come first in our discussion.

Ameliorative Measures.

I. REGULATION OF AGRICULTURAL WAGES.

The most immediate necessity is to begin by improving the condition of that class of the rural population, the agricultural labourers, who most need help. Broadly speaking, this means that we must deal with agricultural wages. So far the labourers have shown themselves unable to combine for any length of time to obtain better terms for themselves; and such improvement as has taken place in their remuneration, which is still rather below the subsistence level, has been due to the scarcity of rural labour, the very phenomenon which we desire to abolish. According to Mr. Wilson Fox, the lowest average weekly

earnings (including all extras for hay and corn harvest, etc.) were in Oxfordshire, 14s. 6d. in 1902, and the highest in Durham, 22s. 2d.; weekly cash wages ran from 10s. in some districts of Dorsetshire to a county average of 20s. in Durham. These wide local variations make it almost impossible to introduce one uniform minimum wage for agricultural labour over the whole country, and the multiplicity and irregularity of the constituents which make up the weekly earnings render the task of regulating wages locally exceedingly difficult. How far it might be possible to improve matters by regulating simply the cash weekly wage, leaving other payments to be matters of individual bargaining, is doubtful. If all extras could be abolished, and a weekly money wage substituted for them, the work of regulation would be simplified; the domestic economy of the labourers would be improved, and their dependence on the local shopkeeper—the current indebtedness which is wiped out when the extra money comes in—might be abolished. Yet it is a difficult thing to interfere with long-established custom, especially when dealing with such an ingrained conservative as the British working-man. The simplification of remuneration could only be safely taken in hand when asked for by the labourers of any particular district. So long as the existing system was maintained in its broad features, it would be necessary to have regard to the customary extra payments in fixing the weekly wage; and if it turned out later that the labourer gave away in bargaining for these what he had gained in his regular wage, they too would have to be brought within the scope of regulation. Payments in kind further complicate the problem. Beer is generally given in haytime and harvest. Coals, wood, potatoes, barley, oatmeal, milk are supplied free in other places. Elsewhere potato ground is found, ploughed, and manured. When cottages are part of the farm equipment, they are generally let to the labourer at a nominal rent of 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week instead of the 3s. or 4s. they would normally fetch. In the north of England they are usually supplied free with garden ground, making a notable addition to the income of the labourer.

Wage courts.—The State, then, being forced, on ac-

count of general national interests, to intervene for the purpose of securing to the labourer a substantial improvement in his standard of life, can only do so effectively by paying regard to local conditions. Courts to fix wages must be established in areas of appropriate size, probably counties, or county council areas. The constitution of these bodies will be discussed later. Their function should not be merely to ascertain what wage the free play of competition would determine and to sanction that, as so many arbitrators have done. Their duty, as expressed by statute, should be the fixing of wages for a term of years, say two or three, at such a level as would enable a labourer to bring up his family in comfort and, at the same time, to have the possibility of rising to a higher level of welfare. For this purpose all local customs and conditions should be taken into account, and, without any attempt at ensuring the same level of remuneration over the whole country, or aiming at a very large and sudden increase, which would disrupt the local agricultural economy, the principle should be kept steadily in view that no agriculture should be permitted which depended on the sweating of the labourer. The courts must also make special terms for the employment of old men. If meanwhile, as is possible, a national minimum wage, based on the minimum demands of bare healthy subsistence, is fixed, the work of the courts will be facilitated, and they can definitely devote themselves to raising the standard of life above this minimum level.

Cottage rents.—Cottage rent forms a serious complication of the wages problem. The present system of treating a low rent as involving a grant in aid of wages is thoroughly vicious. Broadly speaking, the rural cottages of England are only fit to be pulled down; and the impossibility of getting a rent which will repay the cost of construction prevents landlords from rebuilding. On the other hand, labourers prefer not to live in the farmers' cottages if they can help it; nor should we do anything to perpetuate their dependence on the farmer and landlord. Consequently, it is to the local authorities that we must look for that supply of comfortable cottages, with sufficient gardens, without which all other efforts at increasing, or

even retaining, the agricultural population will fail. Nor, in turn, can we expect local authorities to build when they cannot get an economic rent. In fixing wages, therefore, we must expect our courts to take such a rent into account; and the farmers, where they still let cottages, must be left free to raise their rents to a proper level.

The unmarried labourer.—One other crux of wage fixing remains, the needs of different labourers according to the size of their families. On this it can only be said that we must work by averages. The unmarried labourer will certainly gain compared with the married, but, on the other hand, he will thus be enabled to save up for house furnishing and the higher expenses of married life. If one result is an increased birth-rate in the rural districts, that need not trouble us. Comfort, in the long run, does not make for an awkward population question.

2. FAIR RENTS.

Having established the most necessitous class of agriculturists on a sounder economic basis, and having arrived at an approximately more rational estimation of the labour cost of farming, we must next deal with the farmers themselves. Obviously their rents will require readjustment in consequence of the increase in wages. Even under present conditions rents are very generally too high, and the good farmer improves his land only for the profit of the landlord. "At present," says Mr. Pringle, one of the Sub-commissioners under the Royal Commission on Agriculture, "there is on many estates a distinct penalty attached to good farming and a clear incentive to bad farming." In addition, the system of annual tenure does not make for good cultivation. The farmer wants, besides fair rents, reasonable fixity of tenure, freedom from restrictive covenants as to tillage, and proper compensation for improvements. The landlord, on the other hand, wants as much rent as he can get and security that his land should be properly farmed.

Once again private enterprize has failed to secure the ends desired; once again the State must interfere. We want to set up County Land Courts which shall fix fair

rents, say, for a tenancy of seven years, and to which disputes as to proper cultivation and compensation for improvements may be referred. In this way the farmer would obtain what he most needs, while at the same time the landlord would have a means of getting rid of an inefficient tenant. But there are not only inefficient tenants, but inefficient landlords as well, nor can there be any unfairness in the court requiring a landlord to make any necessary expenditure on buildings, drainage, etc., on terms to be fixed by the court. Irish experience will warn us against one thing, setting up any form of dual ownership. There must be one owner only of the land; the farmer must possess only a right of user during his tenancy. If he dies or wishes to resign his farm before his term runs out, then there will be only a matter of account between him and his landlord, to be settled, if necessary, by the court. It may so happen that in some districts economic rent will entirely disappear. In such cases once more private interests must yield to the requirements of the community, and landlords may comfort themselves with the knowledge that it is not proposed to reopen the accounts of the past, or to demand restitution of what they may have, to the national injury, annexed wrongfully of the product of the land. To such owners the right might be conceded of requiring the State to purchase their land at a price fixed by the court.

Mr. Gilbert Murray's plan.—Mr. Gilbert Murray, the Derbyshire land agent, outlined before the Royal Commission on Agriculture a rent-fixing scheme which is worth reproduction: "It must be conceded that any equitable method of fixing the rental value of land must be based on its capabilities of production, this being the first and most important factor in the calculation, and on which the subsequent success or failure of the scheme entirely depends. Take the land in a normal state, without regard to extra manurial condition, which, according to the Act of 1883, belongs to the tenant, or to dilapidations for which the landlord is entitled to compensation. The valuer carefully inspects each separate enclosure belonging to each holding, making a note of the average quantities of pro-

duce it is best adapted to produce; having done this, calculating the quantities and attaching to each the market prices of the day are purely clerical; having scheduled the quantities under the different heads, a permanent standard is arrived at, forming a basis on which all future fluctuations of prices are calculated; by this means the average gross value per acre of the produce is ascertained. The next factor is the cost of production, which varies in almost every occupation. The items which go to make up the gross cost of production are manual labour, horse labour, seeds and plants, tradesmen's bills, interest on capital, tenant's remuneration, insurance of stocks and crops, and depreciation on implements and machinery; collectively these are the outgoings which, deducted from the gross value of the produce per acre, the balance is the amount available for rent, rates, and tithe; the latter in whatever way they are put are landlord's payments. This may fairly be taken as a fixed amount, the only quantity liable to fluctuation is manual labour. . . . Practical experience confirms that this is the only correct and fair method of ascertaining the rental value of land; if applied to a sliding scale it will mete out equal justice to owner and occupier. The tenant has a free hand for the exercise of his skill and judgment, and the expenditure of his capital in increasing the productive power of the soil to its utmost limit without the fear of an increase of rent, which is ruled by the average prices of the year calculated on the normal produce of the land which still remains a fixed quantity. Here we have an incentive to an improved system of cultivation by which the land would be stimulated and the produce greatly increased. So far the rent has been fixed on the basis of its present capabilities of production. In many cases drainage and buildings are necessary in order to fully develop the natural capabilities of the soil. In every case it is essential that all estate improvements should be done by the landlord. . . . The interest on the outlay on drainage and buildings should be paid by the tenant." (Royal Commission on Agriculture, App. A, xviii., Vol. I.)

Well-known landlords like the Duke of Richmond, Lord Aberdeen, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach are known to be in

favour of the fixing of rents by valuation and not by competition. Several bills for the institution of land courts have been introduced into Parliament by Messrs. Channing, Lambert, Luttrell, Price, and others. The evidence before the Royal Commission also shows that while farmers are still mainly in favour of the existing system their opinions are changing.

Agricultural courts.—So far we have talked only vaguely of Wage Courts and Rent Courts. From many points of view it would be advantageous to have only one authority to deal both with wages and with rents. In future rents will be largely conditioned by wages, on the principle that the first charge on agriculture must be the comfortable maintenance of those directly engaged on the land, whether farmers or labourers. There is scarcely the material in rural districts for constructing wage boards on the New Zealand principle, consisting of equal numbers of elected representatives of employers and employed with a neutral chairman. Both in fixing wages and rents the primary characteristics of the court should be independence, ability, and acquaintance with agricultural affairs. These would probably best be secured by nomination of the members by the Board of Agriculture, with perhaps the additional safeguard that the names should be laid before Parliament in Orders in Council. The Agricultural Court—to choose a name which would cover all its functions—should consist of few members, preferably three, and its area should be not less than that of a county council. Perhaps it might be found possible to group counties together, but the need for paying regard to all local conditions would probably depress the balance in favour of the smaller area. In wage matters the court should first proceed by way of a public inquiry, and, to facilitate the transaction of this part of its business, assessors, representing landlords, farmers, and labourers, might be nominated either by the county or parish councils.

Defects not remedied.—The measures so far suggested would probably improve the condition of farmers and labourers, but they are not in themselves sufficient to place agriculture in the position in which we desire to see it. No provision is made that agricultural labourers should be

anything but labourers for hire. The immediate aim of the legislation proposed is to raise them to the same level of comfort as industrial workers. Farming capital is, on the average, much below what was formerly considered necessary. It is often nearer £5 an acre than the standard £10. Fair rents and fair wages will considerably diminish the income of the land-owning class; and, impoverished as many sections already are, we cannot look to the landlords for the expenditure of the money necessary to put the whole of our cultivable area in a good state. The passing of land into wealthier hands must be a slow process, and the new men who seek to grow "not produce, but partridges," as one of Mr. Rider Haggard's informants complains, would be no improvement on the old. The landlord system is condemned economically by its failure, a failure which it cannot attribute to free trade, since in Denmark, which, equally with ourselves, has free trade in agricultural products, and has not advantage of soil or climate, agriculture is prosperous. Such useful functions as landlords sporadically perform as industrial organizers could be performed otherwise more cheaply and with more uniformity and intelligence. And, finally, from the standpoint of national interests, we cannot regard the average country gentleman, with his ideals of sport and idleness, mitigated by casual service to the State in honorific capacities, his claim that he and his fellows constitute the only qualified governing class, and his not infrequent petty tyrannies, as a social institution which we desire to perpetuate.

The success of the foreigner.—The problem is not solved by our plumping in favour of land nationalization, whether wholesale or progressive. We must consider what we desire to be the form of agricultural organization under State ownership. The weakest point in the present system is the marketing of farm products, and before we can tackle reconstruction we must find the cause of this weakness. Our butter comes from Denmark, Russia, France, Australia, New Zealand; cheese from Canada, United States, Holland, New Zealand; eggs from Russia, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, France; vegetables from France and Germany. All these are products which can be supplied at

home in good quality, and the market for them is steadily growing. Why, then, should the British grower be uniformly beaten for the mass of the trade by his foreign competitors?

Railways and agriculture.—The answer is generally that the cause is the policy of British railway companies in conceding preferential rates to foreign importers. The companies reply that foreign consignments arrive in large quantities, easily made up into carloads, with the minimum of expense in collection and delivery, while British consignments are made up of numerous small parcels, necessitating great expense in handling, in clerical labour, and in delivery, and in every way the minimum of profit. Nevertheless there is good reason for believing that the charge is justified in that the rates are actually too high, and their reduction must form a part of any considered progressive policy. But the farmers also are seriously to blame, for the railway companies in recent years, at all events, probably smarting under public opinion and stimulated by the complaints of the Board of Agriculture, have repeatedly offered them exceptional terms if they will unite to send large consignments, but to no purpose.

Co-operation the secret of success.—Cheap railway transport and better conditions of sale can be obtained if the farmers will combine. What has hitherto been lacking is the desire for combination, though in a few localities that defect is being slowly overcome. What characterizes the agriculture of the Continent is the prevalence of combination. Alike in Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Hungary, Finland, Poland, Servia, we find a network of co-operative societies all over the country—societies for the co-operative purchase of seeds, manures, implements and machinery, co-operative creameries for the production of butter and cheese, egg-collecting societies, societies for the sale of fruit or grain, export societies, mutual insurance societies, and so on. This voluntary co-operative movement is generally fostered by the State, and has received much aid from landlords and religious bodies. It is true that their object has often been to create a new anti-socialist force, but our aim must

be to free the movement from such selfish influences by putting it under communal guardianship.

The co-operation of the State with agriculturists is well exemplified by our colonies, where, for instance, the Governments of Australia and New Zealand inspect and classify produce, provide cold storage depots, and publish lists of the "creameries" and cheese "factories"—many of them owned by the farmers co-operatively—within their boundaries. So well known and so reliable is the Government hall-mark that, if his goods are certified to be of the finest grade, the shipper can sell them "to arrive" c. i. f., while certain creameries and factories of special repute can dispose of their produce months in advance. The large wholesale dealers will not bother about the scrappy supplies, of varying quantities and qualities, of English goods while they can get uniform parcels in large quantities of colonial and continental produce. Again, the combined dairy interests of Victoria were able to get the rate of freight to England reduced for three years from ¾d. to ⅜d. per pound of butter. First and last, co-operation is the secret of success.

Large farms and co-operation.—The one common link between all these different countries is that they are mainly peasant countries in which small-scale farming is the dominant form. Now it would appear that large-scale farming tends to individualism, whereas small holdings make evident the advantages of mutual assistance. To the large farmer the neighbouring large farmers appear as his immediate competitors, obscuring the fact that there is room for all so long as such large imports come in from abroad. Hence arise mutual jealousies, unwillingness to let his neighbours know his customers, the fear of helping his rivals to make a profit—all the petty causes which unite to prevent such simple forms of combination as a joint stock creamery or associated consignments of farm produce by railway. "My experience," says Mr. Rider Haggard, "is that large farmers absolutely refuse to combine. Small holdings seem to be essential to successful co-operation."

That the large farm system is the main cause of the opposition to combination appears more convincingly when

we consider the spread of co-operation among the peasant proprietors of Ireland, where the revival of agriculture is solely due to combined action among the peasants. Even in England, in those districts where small holdings prevail, we find co-operation flourishing. Thus the Evesham fruit growers combine to sell direct without a middleman. The Rew Farm (Dorset) peasant proprietors co-operate in ploughing and threshing. The Vale of Tivy (Cardigan) Society has 600 members, makes joint purchases of supplies, and undertakes the bulk sale of its members' Christmas poultry and pigs. The Emlyn Society also sells poultry. The Welsh societies are grouped in a federation, which in 1903 made purchases on behalf of its members to the amount of £25,000.

Small farms and landlordism.—Side by side with this phenomenon of the development of combination among small holders is the other that small farms yield a better rent than large ones and are in more demand, as may be seen from almost every page of Mr. Rider Haggard's great inquiry. It may be asked why then cannot we leave things to their natural development? The more profitable forms of agriculture must necessarily drive out the less profitable. The answer is that many landlords cannot afford the capital outlay required to equip with buildings, fences, etc., the small farms into which the existing large farms might be divided. Many others violently object to small holdings on account of the additional trouble they give, the resulting interference with sport, and other anti-social reasons. An even more serious objection is the unduly high rents charged for small holdings. Thus Mr. Rider Haggard, after quoting instances near Bewdley of a 40-acre farm paying 50s. an acre, while an adjoining farm of 250 acres of similar land was rented at 20s. an acre, and of a rent of £40 a year for 24 acres of poor land, while a neighbouring farm of between 300 and 400 acres paid only 12s. or 13s. an acre, says: "Although it must be remembered that little holdings are necessarily more expensive than large ones, since the landlord must be remunerated for the cost and upkeep of the extra set of buildings, I admit that the difference in the price asked seems to me excessive,

. . . As a remedy, I suggest that such tenancies should, as far as possible, be under the management of county councils or other public bodies, which could buy the land in large blocks and sell or let it out in small ones without being exposed to the temptation of seeking to take advantage of the demand in order to secure an extravagant profit."

The small holding also gives the labourer his first opportunity of rising. With a little capital he can raise himself out of the position of a drudge and undertake work requiring intelligence and foresight. As to the efficiency of small holdings, even when very small, in stemming the rural exodus, Mr. Winfrey gives some interesting evidence. Taking nineteen parishes round Spalding, the population in 1881 was 38,789; in 1891, 36,507; and in 1901, 36,392. In the last decade the population in this area has been almost stationary, whereas elsewhere it has declined rapidly, and no other reason can be assigned except the allotments and small holdings movement since 1887, in consequence of which some 2,300 acres are now cultivated in allotments and 830 acres in small holdings.

Peasant proprietorship.—Since then small farms are themselves profitable and tend to the growth of co-operation, since, further, they increase the rural population by offering an inducement to the labourers to stay on the land, we are justified in taking this system as the most advantageous basis for the reconstruction of agriculture. Complete analogy with foreign countries and with Ireland would, however, lead us to the introduction of a peasant proprietary. Several reasons militate against this. All the advantages of peasant proprietorship can be secured by according to farmers a sufficient security of tenure, while by not having to purchase his farm the tenant would have his capital free for stocking his holding. There is also no means of getting rid of an incompetent peasant proprietor except through the Bankruptcy Court. Men of small resources, again, fall easy victims to changes in the world market for agricultural produce; and the peasantry of Germany, as well as of many English districts, are burdened with mortgages. The creation of a peasant proprietary would introduce us to troublesome questions of

inheritance, sub-letting, and splitting up of properties. Furthermore, there are certain troublesome social phenomena, results of peasant proprietorship, such as the "two children" family, from which we may well ask to be spared. The hard grinding toil on small properties has also bad psychical effects. On the small copyholds in Downham (Cambridgeshire) Mr. Rider Haggard quotes Canon Thornton that the conditions of life are "brutalizing in their hardness," and that the people "grow stolid, hard, and capricious." The Small Holdings Act of 1890 was specially designed to aid the creation of peasant proprietors, but, from that point of view, has been a complete failure. Being forced by urgent necessity to intervene with all the power of the State to rescue the land from the mismanagement of one set of private owners, it would be a short-sighted policy on our part to hand it over to another class of private owners, and that one which has always been stubbornly and timorously conservative.

Socialists and bonanza farms.—There is one socialist agricultural ideal which has so far been left untouched. Extending manufacturing development to agriculture, and arguing on analogy with the bonanza farms of America, some have contemplated a future in which England would be cut up into large farms with a specialized cultivation, worked by machinery and managed by State officials. Much the same ideas are put forward by some landlords. This solution leaves out of account one of our objects, the settling of more people on the land. It is a plan to do without agricultural labourers, not to increase them. On economic grounds we have reason to doubt whether giant farms are suited to our conditions. In America they are now being broken up, while we have quite enough evidence, from the published results of small holdings, that volume of output and quality of product do not necessarily depend upon the magnitude of the area cultivated as a unit. In an old country what is needed is intensive cultivation, the most careful attention to the peculiarities of each separate field. This is best attained by farms of moderate size cultivated by persons having a direct personal interest in getting continuously the largest and most marketable product out of the soil.

Graduated farms.—While, however, as has been said, small farms must form the basis of our new organization, it does not follow that all the farms need be small. Even at present a competent farmer with plenty of capital and a reasonable rent, who employs scientific methods and adapts his knowledge to the changing needs of the market, can and does make farming pay, and, with the increase of the agricultural population, the labour question would be to some extent solved. It is also most desirable to avoid that monotony of rural society which would result from holdings of uniform size, and there is no reason to suppose that the maximum of capacity would be satisfied by a farm only large enough to occupy a man and his family and, perhaps, one or two assistants. The term "small farm" is itself incapable of sharp definition; according to the crop and method of culture it may be anything from 20 to 150 acres. From all points of view, not least from the social, the sanest ideal is that of a graduated style of land division, resting firmly on a broad basis of small farms and rising above into larger holdings of different sizes such as will give employment to all grades of agricultural talent.

Land nationalization.—Our ultimate aim is to bring the whole of the land into national ownership, but before we buy we want to know what would be a fair price after allowing for fair wages to the labourer and fair profits to the farmer, and we do not want to have all the land of the country on our hands before we are quite sure what we are going to do with it and have acquired the skill and knowledge necessary for its management. In this matter we must proceed gradually. Nor do we contemplate administration from Whitehall. Agriculture is precisely the thing which demands local management and control. The function of the central government is to assist the local authorities with its credit, to superintend their financial arrangements, and to conduct the scientific study of agriculture.

Constructive measures. Statutory agricultural committees: constitution.—At present we have the germ of local administration in the Small Holdings Committee, which every county council is bound by statute to form. But the urban as well as the rural areas are concerned with

agriculture; their supplies of eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit, butter, cheese, and, above all, of milk may well come from their own neighbourhood, and the utilization of the land immediately bordering on their margins is of prime importance to them. Consequently, we propose the constitution in each county council area of a statutory Agricultural Committee composed of members of the county council and of all borough councils within its geographical area. To this joint committee will be entrusted the management of all the lands which may be acquired from private owners. A smaller area than a county would hardly give us the requisite choice among men of ability, but to the parish councils might be delegated certain minor functions at the will of the committee. It must also be made possible, by the grant of suitable subsistence and travelling allowances, for any qualified man to take part in this work, and not merely the man with a horse and trap who at present has almost a monopoly of county government. When the new system has got thoroughly to work, and its possibilities become clearer, it may become advisable to link up these committees into larger areas, as has been proposed in other branches of local administration. But at first it will be better to begin at as many points as possible, and to conciliate and, as it were, circumvent rural conservatism by sticking to known areas. The expenses of the Committee would be a charge on the rents received, though perhaps at first there might be a small charge on the rates for starting the machinery.

Powers and terms of compulsory purchase.—The Committee would have power to acquire land compulsorily. If a fair rent had already been fixed, then the purchase would proceed on the lines of securing to the vendor his net income, that is, the rent, less the expenditure of about one-fourth on repairs and improvements, which is necessary to keep the land in a lettable condition. If such a rent has not been fixed, then its ascertainment would form a preliminary to purchase. It is not proposed to buy out at full price a landlord whose rent comes from the sweating of the farmer and the labourer. Nor would cash necessarily pass. All that we are bound to do is to guarantee to the

loans at three per cent. to creameries for the purchase of Pasteurizing plant on the collective bond of the members. The Congested Districts Board of Ireland provides fishermen with boats on periodical payments, and between the 5th August, 1891, and the 31st March, 1904, spent £113,894 in buying horses, asses, cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, implements, etc., for resale to its tenants. New Zealand in 1894, Victoria in 1890 and 1896, New South Wales in 1899 and 1902, passed Acts allowing advances to settlers on mortgage; while West Australia in 1894 and 1896, South Australia in 1895, and Queensland in 1901, established land banks with State loans to promote the occupation, cultivation, and improvement of agricultural lands. We may also mention the advances made to landlords under the Drainage and Improvement Acts, and the recommendation of the Royal Commission that public money should be advanced to owners "for the purpose of agricultural improvements" at a fair rate of interest. £4,000,000 were advanced by the Exchequer under the early Drainage Acts. We therefore contemplate that an Agricultural Committee should encourage the union of its tenants into agricultural associations, to which it should make advances on the collective guarantee of the members for the purpose of stocking farms. The Committee would borrow the money from which to make loans on a national guarantee, the interest being a first charge on the capital of the farms. In this way the difficulty of allotting the loan among the component bodies of the Committee would be small. The risk, in any case, would not be great. Responsibility for making the advances to individuals would lie with the association, which would be bound in self-defence to see to it that the borrower was of good character. In this way we would follow the excellent example of the Continental associations, and it is worth noting that the moral character of the villagers generally improves where there is an association, so that they may qualify for a loan. It is better that the Committee should make advances to such an association rather than stock the farms itself, not only on account of the additional security, but on account of the impulse given to co-operation. The farmers could

also utilize these associations for the joint purchase of seeds, manures, etc., and also for sale of farm produce. One specialty of farm capital is that much of it is only used for a brief part of the year and lies idle during the rest, such as reapers, etc., which are also too costly for the small man. Aided by loans from the Committee, an association might purchase such machines and hold them in common property, letting them out in rotation among the members. The improvement of our cattle and sheep herds might also be furthered by the common ownership of pedigree bulls and rams in the same way.

Marketing the produce.—The Agricultural Committees might still further assist the farmers by helping to organize the sale of their produce. To some extent this would be done by the extension of light railways and motor services in order to improve the means of communication and transport. The Post Office might also institute an agricultural parcels post. But even after everything had been done in this way, and even after railway rates had been reduced as a result of nationalization, much would remain to be done before railway transport was organized in the cheapest possible fashion. Once again the Congested Districts Board affords us a precedent, for it for some years bought fish from the fishermen on the West Coast of Ireland, cured them, and arranged for their sale in Manchester; when it had proved to the private fish-dealers that a lucrative trade was possible it retired from the business.

A beginning might be made by getting municipal supplies from the communal tenants—the grain, dairy, and vegetable products for the workhouses and industrial schools, and fodder for the municipal horses, while the horses themselves might be bred on the communally owned farms. If the milk supply is municipalized, that would afford an opportunity for further integration. The Government might buy their remounts direct from the farmers, sending good stallions into the different districts, or might even start large horse farms. The War Office and Admiralty might also arrange for supplies of butter, cheese, bacon, and vegetables from the county tenants. Some things might also be done for the supply of the general market.

Working through the agricultural associations, the Agricultural Committees might make advances for the starting of creameries, and might supervise the grading and standardizing of butter and cheese. The certificate of the Irish Board of Agriculture is valued by the Irish tenants, and has had good results in improving the quality of the products. Packing and forwarding agencies might be started in various centres, to collect agricultural produce, grade it, and forward it to the markets in quantities large enough to secure the best terms from the railway companies. From each agency collectors might tour the neighbouring districts in regular circuits, collecting eggs, etc., from the farmers and cottagers. The L. and N.W. Railway Company collects ducks in the Aylesbury district in its own carts and sends them to London. The low value of much British farm produce is due to imperfect grading and careless packing, defects which would be remedied at the agency. The expenses incurred would, of course, form a first charge on the prices obtained. Co-operative jam factories might also be set up in fruit-growing counties. The natural sale area of any rural district is the towns in its immediate vicinity, and the committees would turn their attention to obtaining proper market facilities in these by establishing sale agencies. Negotiations might also be opened up with co-operative stores for the supply of agricultural produce to be resold to their members. The general principle to be kept in mind is that the market is large enough to allow all British growers to dispose of all their produce provided it is of the same quality and cheapness as foreign produce, and that consequently it is their business to co-operate in order to secure the best terms of sale instead of entering into foolish competition with each other.

We need not be disappointed, however, if not much produce comes into the market from the smaller classes of holdings, especially those where the occupiers follow some other avocation as well. Mr. Winfrey, writing of the small holdings in Spalding, says: "The tenant is well aware that his best policy is not to sell at all, but consume as much as possible of his produce in the form of potatoes, vegetables, home-baked bread, home-fed bacon, and home-grown broad

beans, not to name a couple of domestic fowls occasionally on Sunday for dinner. In this way he avoids selling his produce in a bulk at a low figure, and having to buy bread and meat. His table can generally be well stocked with plain food from the land, leaving his wages free for other purposes. Straw, too, is a great convenience. It makes possible the Christmas fat pig." Such small holders would particularly profit from the collecting agencies suggested above. Poultry rearing is best undertaken as an adjunct to other farming; to devote an acre or two of a small farm to bush or tree fruit, or to early vegetables, is generally a safe source of good profit. But the cost of getting the goods to market often destroys all the grower's gain. The institution of a daily motor goods service connecting a small farm district with the nearest town or a suitable railway station consequently commends itself to us as not only convenient to the grower, but also advantageous to the public.

So far we have discussed what the State can do to put land, capital, and a market within reach of the agriculturist. One thing still remains—skill—and the State can aid in its provision.

Educating the agriculturist.—Beginning at the bottom, education in country districts must be aimed more directly than it is to-day at fitting the children for a rural life. We will make no truce with the proposal to supply farmers with cheap child labour in the guise of a seasonal half-time system on the plea that if boys are not applied early to farm labour, they will abandon the land. When a career on the land is offered to the agricultural labourer's son, it will be found that a good education, if not entirely bookish, will fit, and not unfit, him for his work. This is even more true of middle-class education, so lamentably faulty in country districts. Continuation school work in agricultural subjects might also be tried for the benefit of lads who have left school. Existing agricultural colleges are doing good work, but there should be more of them; and their instruction should be brought within the reach of the small holder, who might be able to take a special course, but could not afford much in fees. In other ways technical instruction might be brought to the doors, as it were, of

the farmers. Already some county councils send travelling dairies round the countryside to instruct dairy workers; but this tends to perpetuate the private dairy, whereas the future lies with the co-operative dairy of the Danish stamp. Agricultural organizers and instructors might be employed who, by personal visits or by holding quite small meetings, might give the farmers much useful instruction and information, and help to keep them up to date both as regards markets and the application of science to agriculture. The formation of farmers' clubs, shows, agricultural societies, and the vivification of those now existing, would help to this end. In agricultural research we are lamentably behind every other country, our colonies included. We have relied on the munificence of a few individuals, and lately on the enterprize of the Universities. This is a matter of the most urgent importance. To take but one example, the future of British wheat farming will turn largely on the possibility of evolving by cross fertilization a new wheat combining the good baking qualities of Canadian wheat and the large cropping qualities of British wheat. Our State contribution to this object has been £100. Such misguided parsimony must cease. The main duty of the Board of Agriculture of the future must be the purveying of information, and it must be given funds to enable it to become on a much larger scale than at present the intelligence department of rural Britain. Among other institutions bearing upon this work, it must organize a research department in which the best agricultural talent that can be obtained will be constantly at work on the improvement of agricultural methods and processes and the solution of urgent agricultural problems.

The agriculturist of the future.—Many writers dilate upon the dullness of rural life, and to the agricultural labourer it must be dull enough. Underpaid, underfed, badly housed, with little pleasure in the present and scant hope for the future, and with a tradition of oppression from all the classes above him—the liberty and the squalid attractions of the great town easily overpower the few ties that bind him to the country. This is the kind of life we desire to change. Give him a decent wage, decent food, a

decent house, security from the interference of squire, farmer, and parson in his private affairs, and, above all, a real chance of bettering himself, and we shall see a new style of agricultural worker. There is something in the "magic of property," above all, of property in oneself.

Much depends upon the way in which the housing problem is solved, not merely the house accommodation, but the grouping of the houses. The large farm, to which some look for the salvation of agriculture, with its isolated farmhouse (or perhaps an absentee farmer in a town some miles away), staffed by a few shepherds or engineers, does not sound as if likely to add much to the gaiety of rural life. When the local authority builds cottages for labourers it must build them neither in isolated ones or twos about a farm, nor yet in close conglomerations in some marshy hollow, but in loose clusters, surrounded with gardens, interspersed with the bigger houses of the larger farmers. The dwelling houses of the small farmers might be in the same or similar groups, while the farm buildings were on the holdings some distance away, but yet within easy reach. In this way a chain of associated life would run through the countryside. With the revival of agriculture would come also the revival of the small towns which at present decay with the decay of rural industry. In this way, in a real and practical sense, the towns would be "spread over the country," and a stimulus given to the decentralization of manufacture. Round their suburbs would run a ring of farms, and within their precincts many of the workers on the nearer large holdings might reside. The outer village-clusters would be closely connected with them by motor services and light railways. In all these ways the best elements of town and country life would be interfused. The rural districts would be more closely settled, and while the general health of the nation would be improved, dullness and apathy would be eliminated from country life.

Summary.—To sum up: the breakdown of private enterprise in agriculture has left us with landlords and farmers impoverished, with agricultural labourers earning less than, or just over, subsistence wages. Much capital has been lost, the agricultural population has declined to

a dangerous degree. There is no organization for the supply of our growing town markets, everywhere is chaos, while the foreign producer every day gains ground by superior organization. It is necessary for the State to interfere, partly to secure the better utilization of our national resources, partly to increase our agricultural population. We must look forward to five-and-twenty years of resolute effort; prosperity cannot be restored in a day. The class most needing protection, the labourers, must be dealt with first in order to raise them to a decent level of comfort. A living wage must be secured to them and, as a consequence, the farmers' rents must be fixed at a fair level. An Agricultural Court must be set up in each county to regulate wages and fix rents. Continental success in agriculture depends on co-operation, and that in turn is associated with the peasant proprietor system. That system, for sundry reasons, cannot be adopted here, but its advantages can be obtained through security of tenure. The small farm system should, therefore, form the basis of our reconstruction, free play being left for a graded system of farms where possible. In each county an Agricultural Committee should have compulsory power to acquire land and let it out to tenants, chiefly small holders. It should have power to advance capital to individuals on the collective guarantee of its tenants, and it should be its duty to organize the collection of farm produce and its disposal in the market.

All the evidence we possess points to the probability that in this way we should increase our agricultural population, and thereby ameliorate many town problems. Yet it is risky and certainly revolutionary, but that is always the case when order has to be brought out of chaos. The process, however, will be gradual, not catastrophic, and as it goes on the rural dwellers will learn that county government is not something outside them, but that it is themselves, concerned with their interests, flourishing with their prosperity, decaying in their adversity. When this lesson has been learned, the development will proceed swiftly and harmoniously to the desired end.

[Some of the proposals made in this tract have been adopted in the Allotments and Small Holdings Act, 1907.]

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ROBERT OWEN.

ROBERT OWEN,

THE FOUNDER OF SOCIALISM IN ENGLAND.

BY

ARTHUR JOHN BOOTH, M.A.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE not attempted to write a complete Biography of Robert Owen,—such a work can only be undertaken by an enthusiastic disciple, gifted with unlimited patience. My object has been to sketch the history of the movement with which his name is identified; and I have therefore deliberately omitted many incidents, interesting perhaps in themselves, but not directly connected with my special task. I am conscious how very imperfectly this work has been executed; I hope, however, it may be so fortunate as to direct the attention of an abler writer to a subject that is almost entirely unknown, but not without a certain retrospective interest.

LONDON, *May*, 1869.

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ROBERT OWEN.

CHAPTER I.

NEW LANARK.

"Plongez hardiment votre vue dans l'avenir; ne pouvez-vous pas imaginer un état de société si prospère que les familles laborieuses, prémunies par leur propre sagesse contre toutes les chances du hasard, n'auraient plus besoin en aucune circonstance d'implorer la compassion soit de l'État, soit des citoyens?"—*Duchâtel.*

ROBERT OWEN was born in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, in May, 1771. His father was a respectable saddler, who, besides his trade, undertook the management of the Post-Office and the general business of the parish. He had been unfortunate at an early period of his life, having lost an estate of £500 a year, through the dishonesty of his lawyer. Robert was the youngest but one of a family of seven; he was sent to school before he was five years of age, and soon showed a taste for learning. One day, in his anxiety to be early

at school, he swallowed scalding flummery. He fainted, and remained for some time insensible; his digestion, became, in consequence, very weak. Though this accident occurred before he was five years of age, it is said to have left a permanent trace on his character. "It made me," he says, "attend to the effects of different qualities of food on my changed constitution, and gave me the habit of close observation and of continued reflection; and I have always thought that this accident had a great influence in forming my character."

At the age of seven, the diligent pupil had exhausted the rather limited knowledge of his schoolmaster. From that period he became an usher in the school; he continued this task for two years, and thus acquired the important art of conveying his knowledge to others. At the same time, his leisure was more agreeably occupied by reading, generally at the rate of a volume a day, all the books he could lay his hand upon; they were mainly supplied by the clergyman, the doctor, and lawyer of the town; they embraced a varied field of literature, from 'Robinson Crusoe' down to 'Meditations among the Tombs.' About the age of eight or nine, he made the acquaintance of three maiden ladies, who were Methodists. These amiable persons at once conceived an interest in the soul of the studious child; they endeavoured, in consequence, to ensure his salvation by effecting his conversion to their religious creed. The boy was already extensively read in the various opinions of contending sects; and he writes, "Their deadly hatred to each other began to create doubts in my mind respecting the truth of any." While per-

plexed by these harassing thoughts, he wrote three sermons, which were carefully treasured for a time. At length the youthful author came across the discourses of 'Yorick,' and saw that they bore such a striking similarity, both in thought and expression, to his own, that, fearing a charge of plagiarism, he destroyed his productions. Little good could be anticipated from such an active mind, and the religious tracts with which he was deluged did not produce the effect contemplated. At ten years of age he felt strongly that there must be something fundamentally wrong in all religions. The three maiden ladies must have viewed with horror the result, for which their teaching may have been in some degree responsible. But theological studies, however absorbing, were not incompatible with more boyish pursuits: he excelled in games, and was the best runner and leaper in the school; he learned dancing, and kept the patriotism of his neighbours constantly alive by the vigorous performance of "God Save the King" upon the clarinet. About this time he made the acquaintance of a young gentleman from college, of the name of Donne; this cultivated person was the first to awaken in his mind a sense of the beauties of nature. At a future period, when the name of Owen became widely known, Mr. Donne displayed the warmth of his early friendship, by tracing the founder of the Rational System in direct descent from the princes of North Wales. Already, at ten years of age, Owen's ambition had outgrown his village birthplace. He obtained the consent of his parents to go up to London, to seek his fortune; his eldest brother was settled as a saddler

in Holborn, and Robert joined him. Shortly afterwards he got a situation with Mr. James M'Guffog, a hosier, at Stamford. "The terms offered to me were for three years: the first without pay, the second with a salary of £8, and the third with £10, and with board, lodging, and washing in the house. These terms I accepted, and, being well provided with clothes to serve me more than a year, I from that period—ten years of age—maintained myself, without ever applying to my parents for any additional aid." M'Guffog was an enterprising Scotchman, who had begun life as a hawker with half-a-crown; he now possessed the best business in Stamford, and at his death left £1000 a year to his widow. Owen was kindly received, and speedily ingratiated himself with his new master. The business occupied six hours a day, but Owen found time besides for five hours' study. Early in the morning, in the fine summer months, he would go with a volume of Seneca in his pocket, and wander alone through the noble avenues of Burleigh Park. In these walks he had much to engage his thoughts, for his mind was still agitated by religious doubts; he compared anxiously one religion with another, and laboured earnestly to find the right way. It seemed to him that all theologies—the Christian among the rest—proceeded from the deluded imagination of ignorant men; that they are all based upon the doctrine of Free Will, which is at variance with the fact that character is wholly formed by circumstances beyond the control of the individual. At length, after many a severe struggle, the clouds dispersed, and the mind regained its calm, —all doubt vanished, and the dogmas of sectarianism

were replaced by the larger life of charity. Before he had reached this serener atmosphere, when about the age of twelve, he wrote a letter to Mr. Pitt, then Prime Minister, to complain of the desecration of the Sabbath, which was habitual at Stamford; shortly afterwards a proclamation issued from the Government on the subject, and the country people gave the credit to their village prodigy. At the expiration of his time, Owen left Mr. M'Guffog, and went to visit his friends in London and Wales. After some months passed in this way, he got a situation in a large retail establishment near London Bridge. There he had not much time for reading or theological speculation: on rising, his first care was bestowed on the adjustment of his pigtail, and the powdering and curling of his hair; business began at eight o'clock, and the shop-doors were not closed until eleven at night. Afterwards, all the articles shown during the day had to be replaced, an occupation which was sometimes protracted till two in the morning; then it happened that Owen "was scarcely able, with the help of the bannisters, to go upstairs to bed," and only five hours remained for sleep. He found this labour too severe, and he was fortunately able to effect an exchange to Manchester, where, besides board and lodging, he received £40 a year. This apprenticeship in London, however, contributed in some degree to his future success. "I was obliged to acquire habits of quickness in business, and of great industry, long continued, day after day, without ceasing." His new situation was quite suited to his taste, and, with £40 a year for pocket-money, he already considered himself rich.

employment were very great, but at length he triumphed over every obstacle. He had to direct the labour of 500 men, and many of the branches of the business were quite unknown to him; he possessed, however, by nature the art of managing men. He attributes his skill to the spirit of charity, which had replaced in his mind the old hatreds engendered by theology. He had perceived that, as man could not make his own organization, he could not justly be held responsible for his errors. "My mind, in consequence, became calm and serene,—anger and illwill died within me." The compassionate taskmaster soon gained the confidence of the men. Results were easily attained by kindness, that no severity had ever been able to accomplish; not only was the work conducted with industry, but the habits of the people underwent an improvement. "Their order and discipline exceeded that of any other in or near Manchester, and for regularity and sobriety they were an example which none could then imitate."

It was in 1790, when Owen had been engaged in this way for about six months, and before he was yet twenty years of age, that Mr. Drinkwater summoned him to his country-house. Owen obeyed with great trepidation; though the responsible manager of one of the largest manufactories at Manchester, he was still a shy and awkward boy. He was painfully conscious of the defect of his early education; he spoke ungrammatical English, strongly impregnated with Welsh idiom, and had never been in any society, except what a shop-boy can command. But, notwithstanding the fears it had excited, the interview passed most satisfactorily.

Mr. Drinkwater complimented him upon the success of his management and upon the prosperity of the business. He expressed his desire to secure the permanent services of so valuable an assistant; he proposed an immediate increase of salary, and offered to admit Owen into partnership at the expiration of four years. The partnership was to consist of Mr. Drinkwater, his two sons, and Owen; the profits, which might reasonably be expected to be large, were to be divided equally. These favourable terms were at once accepted; the brilliant prospect they afforded were, however, not destined to be realized. In consequence of some family arrangements, Mr. Drinkwater afterwards begged to be released from the contract; this was at once acceded to by Owen, who imposed no conditions. He threw the contract into the fire, and, with some degree of warmth, refused to be any longer Mr. Drinkwater's manager. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Marsland, a great cotton lord, proposed to enter into partnership with him; but this was also declined, because he offered only one-third profits. And thus, upon two occasions, Owen had cause to deplore that the warmth of his feelings had impaired the soundness of his judgment; he, however, treated the occurrence with much resignation. "My constitution, and the previous circumstances in which I had been placed, created these feelings, and I could not have acted otherwise at the time." He soon, however, found a partnership upon very advantageous terms in the Chorlton Twist Company.

His name had now been for some time prominently before the Manchester public; he had acquired the

reputation of being the most skilful manufacturer in the world. But besides this, he was already known for the independence of his speculative opinions; it was on this account that he gained admission to a select literary circle which then existed at Manchester. Some of the professors in the College were in the habit of meeting together on certain evenings, to discuss interesting questions of science and literature; amongst them was John Dalton, who was at that time a professor of natural philosophy, and who afterwards became the discoverer of the Atomic Theory. Owen was also elected a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society, and there he made his first oratorical effort. It was not very successful. "I blushed and stammered out some few incoherent sentences, and felt quite annoyed at my ignorance and awkwardness being thus exposed." He eventually, however, took an active part in debate, and acquired the name of "the Reasoning Machine." Upon one occasion, Coleridge met Owen in discussion. "Mr. Coleridge had a great fluency of words, and he could well put them together in high-sounding sentences; but my few words, directly to the point, generally told well; and although the eloquence and learning were with him, the strength of the argument was generally admitted to be on my side. Many years afterwards, when he was better known and more celebrated, I presented him with a copy of my 'Essays on the Formation of Character;' and the next time I met him after he had read them, he said, 'Mr. Owen, I am really ashamed of myself. I have been making use of many words, and writing and speaking what is called eloquence, while I find you have said

much more to the purpose in plain simple language, easily to be understood, and in a short compass. I will endeavour to profit by it.'" And thus had the illiterate shop-boy, with the ungrammatical English, gained the friendship of the principal men of letters and science in Manchester. This society exercised a most fortunate influence upon him, for his attention was thus constantly diverted to matters of higher importance than spinning cotton from rovings.

Owen's business frequently led him to travel through England and Scotland. During his first visit to Glasgow, he made the acquaintance of a young lady, a Miss Dale. This person possessed a decided character, and from the first interview she resolved to marry him; as is generally the case, under these circumstances, she succeeded. Owen protests that he was at that time little skilled in the mysteries of woman; indeed he informs us that he knew nothing of the sex except as "customers in business;" this lamentable ignorance made him very shy in their society. On one occasion, through this deficiency he had already lost a favourable opportunity: he fell deeply in love with a young lady who had occupied with his devotions a large share of his attentions at church; nor was she insensible to his admiration, but the timid boy would make no further advances. The lady however determined to make an effort to secure such a prize as a rising cotton lord. With this view she went to his house, accompanied by her mother, under the pretence of looking at his flowers; but the matter ended there, and the dangerous visitor retreated without accomplishing her design. Every time Owen

went to Glasgow, he found his intimacy with Miss Dale became closer. Walks were arranged and parties formed, and strange it was that Miss Dale always found out Owen, and Owen found out Miss Dale. At length Fate, through the humble agency of a spinster lady, made the philosopher of the New System a husband according to the Old Law. Mr. Dale, the father of the young lady, did not altogether share their satisfaction. Owen was a foreigner, and, he said, a "land louper" of whom he knew nothing. However, circumstances soon occurred which overcame the parental obstinacy. Mr. Dale was the proprietor of large cotton-mills at New Lanark; he was getting old, and wished to retire from business. When Owen heard this, he communicated the intelligence to his partners in England. From the time of his first visit, he had been struck by the advantages the situation of these mills afforded, not only for a successful business speculation, but also for an experiment of another kind that had long occupied his attention. When his partners had investigated the concern, they agreed to offer Mr. Dale £60,000 for it, to be paid at the rate of £3000 a year; Mr. Dale accepted these conditions without hesitation. This occurred in 1797, about six years after Owen had undertaken the management of Mr. Drinkwater's factory, and when he was twenty-six years of age. All difficulty to his marriage with Miss Dale disappeared soon after this transaction. In a few months he took the direction of the establishment at New Lanark; he received one-ninth of the profits, and a salary, as manager, of £1000 a year.

The first mill had been built at New Lanark in

1785; it was amongst the earliest established in Scotland for spinning cotton; it was placed at Lanark in consequence of the water power to be obtained from the Clyde. In other respects the situation was not well chosen. "The country around was uncultivated; the inhabitants were poor and few in number; and the roads in the neighbourhood were so bad that the Falls now so celebrated were then unknown to strangers." It was not easy to obtain workmen at first, but in 1791 an emigrant ship was driven into Greenock by stress of weather, and Mr. Dale induced most of the passengers to abandon their intention of quitting the country, and to settle instead at Lanark. He built houses for the accommodation of two hundred families; they were chiefly occupied by Highlanders and by a few Irish. There were five hundred children employed in the mills; as was then the custom, they were mostly recruited from public charities and workhouses. Mr. Dale was a very benevolent man and sought to lighten, as far as possible, the servitude of these wretched children; they were properly fed, clothed, and housed, and some care was even bestowed upon their education. Their appearance betokened contentment, and presented a very favourable contrast to the dejection so common elsewhere. The health and morals of the whole population proved the excellence of Mr. Dale's management. "During a period of twelve years, from 1785 to 1797, only fourteen have died, and not one has been the object of judicial punishment."*

* See 'Report of Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor,' vol. ii. no. 69.

Notwithstanding these favourable circumstances, there still remained much for benevolence to accomplish. The workmen were very difficult to obtain, and when skill had made their labour valuable, they became "agents not to be governed contrary to their own inclination." The children had to be taken from the charities at six years old, and at that early age their labour could not be made remunerative except at the cost of much suffering. The care bestowed upon them did not prevent many becoming deformed and dwarfs; numbers continually ran away, others awaited with impatience the expiration of their apprenticeship, and then they would betake themselves to the large towns and fall an easy prey to the first temptation.

Owen had long remarked that two causes determine the character of man—first, the disposition received at birth; second, the circumstances which from childhood upwards are brought to bear upon that disposition. For the first, nature is mainly responsible, though not wholly, for the child not unfrequently inherits from its parents a physical organization which predisposes to vice. Hence it may be feasible by a judicious assortment in marriage very much to increase the natural good disposition of man, precisely as among the lower animals courage, or other qualities, may be developed in a high degree, by a careful attention to breeding. But if human arrangements can exercise an important influence upon character before birth, their power almost becomes omnipotent. Supported by continual experience of the growth of vegetable, man will easily understand this truth; it, in the contrary, he is exposed to the more intense

of vice, he will with no less certainty become vicious. Thus it is that certain classes grow into pickpockets with as much precision as others into Methodist preachers: the one is visited with systematic persecution, the other enjoys the reputation of sanctity. But in truth it is but the result of an accident of location at the moment of birth that the Methodist is not picking oakum with his head shorn, and the criminal discoursing with unction in the pulpit.

In the earlier stages of civilization, when it was customary to ascribe our own malignant passions to the Deity, this anomaly was unhesitatingly attributed to the capricious favour of Heaven. Owen preferred to charge the injustice to society, whose institutions are the work of our own hands. The evil which we ourselves have caused we alone can remedy. It was for this reason that he set himself to work out at New Lanark the great problem of a Reformed Society. His first care was to remove, as far as possible, the temptations to vice. Among the principal of these were the gin palaces, to which most other evils might be directly or indirectly traced; it was there that the workman squandered his wages, and consequently left his family to suffer from want; it was there that he sought to recruit his exhausted energy, and was led by intemperance to an early and despicable death; it was there also that the young men were inflamed by passion and lured into the degrading practice of vice. Owen had these temptations entirely removed from the vicinity of the houses. Every effort was made to inculcate the duty of temperance, and to exhibit the comfort and health produced by its exercise. When the drunkard was just recovering from the

effects of debauchery, when his head was still racked by pain and his stomach oppressed by sickness, no efforts were spared to convince him of his folly.* The irregular intercourse of the sexes was visited by fines inflicted on both parties;† the fines were appropriated to a fund for the support of the sick and aged. Wives were taught to make their dwellings more comfortable, and to lessen thereby the glittering attractions of gin palaces; they learned to cook, so that the food might be more palatable and used with greater economy. Among the many evils that weigh hard upon the poor, there are few more oppressive than the extortionate demands of retailers. Workmen who can ill afford to pay even the fair price of the articles they consume are charged more extravagantly than the richest peer in the West End of London. They are nearly always in debt at the shop, and are therefore entirely in the power of the dealer. If a competitor should establish himself in the vicinity and bid for custom by selling cheaper, the poor are often not able to avail themselves of the advantage because they are bound by debt to the extortioner. It was to remedy these evils that Owen resolved to set up a store where goods could be bought at a fair rate. He procured everything of the best quality at wholesale prices, and sold them to the workmen, adding to the original charge only sufficient to pay the

* Dr. Macnab ('New Views Examined') says that liquor was sold 25 per cent. cheaper than elsewhere, but pot-houses were gradually closed, and Mr. Allen learned from two ministers that during more than one year even a single case of drunkenness was unknown at New Lanark. (Sherman's 'Life of Allen,' p. 161.)

† There were only twenty-seven illegitimate births during a period of eight years. (See Sargent, 'Life of Owen.')

expenses upon the transaction. At a later period he slightly increased this tax, and from it he defrayed the entire charge of the educational establishment.* Although the sum required for this purpose was no less than £700 a year, the goods were nevertheless sold far cheaper than at the ordinary retail shops. He thus enabled the people to procure good wholesome food and articles of excellent quality, and the saving effected upon the purchase practically increased their wages and added to their comfort.† This was the germ from which the co-operative movement has sprung. If we cannot give Owen the credit of the invention, it was he who became its founder and its most magnificent patron; his name will for ever be associated with it, and if he had never contributed anything else to the good of mankind, that alone would entitle him to be classed among our greatest benefactors.‡

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i. p. 318.

† Some families saved as much as 10*s.* a week by this system. (Autobiography, vol. i. p. 135.)

‡ "The retail shops, in all of which spirits were sold, were great nuisances. All the articles sold were bought on credit at high prices to cover great risks. The qualities were most inferior, and they were retailed out to the workpeople at extravagant rates. I arranged superior stores and shops from which to supply every article of food, clothing, etc., which they required. I bought everything with money in the first markets, and contracted for fuel, milk, etc., on a large scale, and had the whole of these articles of the best qualities supplied to the people at the cost price. The result of this change was to save them in their expenses full twenty-five per cent., besides giving them the best qualities in everything instead of the most inferior articles, with which alone they had previously been supplied."

It has been thought by some persons that co-operation, properly so-called, was practised at New Lanark. I have seen it asserted first, that Mr. Owen's store was a co-operative society; second, that the workpeople were admitted to a participation of profits, in a manner similar to that

In the factory, theft upon a large scale had long been practised. Means were adopted to detect the criminal with unfailing certainty; he was not subjected to legal punishment, but had to endure the severe condemnation of opinion.* But no reform could be radical unless it began in infancy.

recently practised by Messrs. Briggs and Co. Neither of these statements are correct. As regards the latter, Lord Brougham has clearly explained:—"Robert Owen and his partners in the great spinning-mills of New Lanark made the workpeople partakers of their profits by educating their children and giving them such instruction as not only fitted them for the work at the mills, but for any other employment. . . . The communication to the workpeople at New Lanark and at Lowell of a share in the profits of their labour was effected in the large provision made for their education and their health, but this necessarily depended upon the employer, and on his change, by death or other causes, the successor might not have the same enlightened views." (Speech, Oct. 1863; See Man. Co-op., vol. iv. p. 82.)

* "That which I found to be the most efficient check upon inferior conduct was the contrivance of a silent monitor for each one employed in the establishment. This consisted of a four-sided piece of wood, about two inches long and one broad, each side coloured, one side black, another blue, the third yellow, and the fourth white; tapered at the top, and finished with wire eyes to hang upon a hook, with either side to the front. One of these was suspended in a conspicuous place near to each of the persons employed, and the colour at the front told the conduct of the individual during the preceding day to four degrees of comparison: bad denoted by black, or No. 4; indifferent, by blue or No. 3; good, by yellow or No. 2; and excellent, by white or No. 1. Then books of character were provided for each department, in which the name of each one employed in it was inserted, which sufficed to mark by the numbers the daily conduct for two months; and these books were changed six times a year and were preserved, by which arrangement I had the conduct of each registered to four degrees of comparison every day of the week, Sundays excepted, for every year they remained in my employment. The Superintendent of each department had the placing daily of these silent monitors, and the Master of the mill regulated those of the Superintendents in each mill. At the commencement of this new method of recording character, the great majority were black, many blue, and a few

Owen, therefore, sought to influence the child from the very earliest period. The system of drafting them from charitable institutions was discontinued. None were employed in the factory till they were eight years old, and their parents were encouraged to defer sending them for two years later. The village school was open to all from five to ten years of age without any charge. The instruction was conducted in such a way as to be agreeable instead of irksome to them, and they came to regard the school even as a pleasure; they returned to their parents for meals, and at night. In all respects the system succeeded admirably: the children made rapid progress in learning, and their parents were relieved during the day from the care of their superintendence.

As was natural, Mr. Owen had to encounter opposition from all sides. The very men for whose benefit he laboured with so much enthusiasm were the first to thwart his efforts. He was a foreigner who had come to extract from them as much labour as possible, and his innovations could have no other object; the member of a different religion, his schemes were probably covert attacks on their faith. Passions that had never known subjection had acquired unconquerable ascendency; tastes from early depravity could be gratified only by licentiousness; they, therefore, held tenaciously to vice, and refused to be converted to virtue. At length a circumstance occurred that, in a measure, overcame their opposition. In 1806 a political difference induced

yellow. Gradually the black diminished and were succeeded by the blue, and the blue were gradually succeeded by the yellow, and some, but at first very few, were white."

the United States to lay an embargo on cotton. The trade instantly collapsed; master spinners dismissed their men; general distress ensued. At New Lanark the people were exempted from these misfortunes; Owen stopped the machinery, but paid the men full wages for merely keeping it in repair. The embargo lasted for four months; during that period the workmen received £7000 for unemployed time. So generous an action was not without its reward: confidence ever afterwards existed between master and men. The innovations proposed were more readily acceded to; the work of reform proceeded with accelerated speed. But Owen had not as yet triumphed over all opposition: the partners with whom he was associated were startled to find that he proposed to expend £5000 upon building schools; he contended that the increased efficiency of labour would more than repay the expenditure. He considered the experiment would be not merely beneficial to humanity, but also a sound commercial speculation. The scheme was not favourably received; his partners came specially from England to see how their manager was conducting the affairs of the firm. Their investigations proved highly satisfactory; they presented Owen with a piece of plate; they complimented him on the success of his management, and on the improved condition of the people; but they could not sanction a further expenditure of £5000 on schools. They conducted business for profit, and not for the benefit of humanity; they were not assured that an investment in intelligence would pay. Fine theories were fine things, but hard cash was still better.

In this dilemma Owen determined to dissolve partnership. "If," he said, "you are afraid to proceed with me, I will offer you a sum for the establishment, which I will either give for it or accept from you. The reply was, Your offer is fair and liberal. What is the sum you fix as its value? I said £84,000." After some consideration they accepted this amount, and Owen became the sole proprietor.* He found, however, that his capital was not sufficient to carry on so large a concern himself. He was joined by Mr. Campbell, of Zura, and three others. The business had hitherto been conducted with great success; a dividend of 5 per cent. had been paid on the capital, and a sum of £60,000 had been realized besides.

After a short time it became evident that the new partners were not more liberal in their views than the former. They objected as emphatically to a large outlay being made for philanthropic purposes; their opposition was intensified by personal pique. They determined to dissolve the partnership, and to dispose of the mills by public sale. They used every effort to depreciate the value of the property, and thus to deter others from bidding. They disseminated exaggerated reports of the wild and visionary schemes of Owen, in order that no one might join him in partnership. They described the ruinous extravagance with which he paid wages above the market price, solely to improve the condition of the people. Owen threw up the management, and went to London. He appeared to take no notice of their proceedings; his attention seemed to be wholly engrossed by visionary schemes of philan-

* This occurred in 1809.

thropy; but this was far from being the case. He had brought with him to London the manuscript of four essays on the 'Formation of Character;' he had them privately printed and circulated among a few select persons. He hoped thereby to attract the attention of influential philanthropists, who would be willing to assist him in his present difficulty.

In his essays, he sought to shift moral responsibility from the individual to society. Man is born without his own consent, and he finds himself endowed by nature with certain dispositions, which are afterwards acted upon by external circumstances over which he has no control. Religion, to which so much importance has been attached, is purely a question of geography. Morality is a matter of custom, fictitiously hallowed by time. The passions bear a direct proportion to warmth: born under a southern sun, no barrier can stem their torrent; each variety of climate produces a subtle influence on the character that may be clearly traced. Moreover, there has been a gradual growth of all opinions, moral, religious, and intellectual; and every age has developed a type peculiar to itself. But no difference of latitude, nor climate, nor generation, has produced a stranger discrepancy between man and man than may be found existing together in the same country, and at the same time; and this difference is caused by the institutions of society; it consists in the gradation of rank, wealth, education, and morality. One man is naturally as good as another; all should have an equal chance of avoiding ignorance, vice, and poverty; yet, such is so little the case, that these misfortunes have actually be-

come hereditary. There are vast numbers who are every year born into the world, and who will inevitably grow up to be a curse to themselves and to others; and this from no fault of their own, but simply on account of the atmosphere they will breathe from infancy. They are born in the back alleys of a great city; perhaps they live in a single room occupied by several families. There is no separation of the sexes; no distinction between the married and unmarried; the parents, who perhaps live by begging or crime, teach the trade to their offspring. While the children of the rich are at school, and trained to honourable sentiments, the children of the poor are sweeping the crossing, and begging for a penny, or perhaps skilfully stealing a handkerchief from the passer-by. Age can only aggravate the evil; as the boy grows into a man, he finds that he knows no trade by which he can gain an honest livelihood; he is forced into crime to live. The same qualities of mind and heart which, under favourable circumstances, would lead to virtue and honour, will, under the influence of evil, only serve to intensify guilt, and to aggravate its punishment. The judge on the bench may owe his position to energy and ambition; but if he had been born in St. Giles's, the very qualities that have contributed to his elevation would have conspired to his ruin. Instead of being first among lawyers, his energy would have made him chief among thieves. Insatiable ambition would have led to some daring crime, and the scaffold and not the bench might have ended his career. It has been hitherto maintained that each individual has complete control over his own character and

destiny. So far as they lie beyond his power they are regulated by Providence: if some terrible calamity afflicts us; in the one case, it is due to our own fault; and in the other, it is the will of Heaven. We now perceive how absurdly false is the first supposition, and we are beginning to recognise the blasphemous folly of the other. It is not to these that sin and misery and crime are to be attributed: it is to the institutions of society, which have left large classes of men to be educated in vice, instead of being carefully trained in virtue.

Hitherto the efforts of society have been solely devoted to the repression of crime by punishment; henceforth they will be directed to its prevention. Now, crime is mainly produced by two causes; it proceeds from poverty and from the want of education. It is therefore the duty of the government to provide the poor with work; nor will this measure be any charge upon the country, because every man can produce far more than he requires for himself; his surplus labour will therefore be a profit to the State. In this manner roads could be made, canals cut, and harbours formed. The rate of wages should be kept rather below the market price, but yet sufficient to enable the labourer and his family to live without further relief; but it would be of still greater practical utility if a pauper farm were to be established in every union; the pauper could thus raise his own food from the ground, and the profit would accrue to the State. But it is not from such measures as these that a radical cure can be wrought; to be effectual, the remedies must be applied from infancy through education. Nor

do we expect that positive instruction in knowledge will be sufficient; it is the character that more especially requires to be formed. The child must be surrounded by whatever will tend to excite the virtuous and to repress the vicious tendencies of his nature. It is the pursuit of happiness that rules the actions of mankind, hence the pupil must be early taught to practise whatever will conduce to the general good, in which his own prosperity is inseparably connected. Society will be charged with this measure of education; its existence depends upon the success of the undertaking, for poverty and crime daily threaten its destruction. Nor are the proposed remedies merely speculative; their efficacy has been tested. Sir William Thomson, at Munich; Fellenberg, in Switzerland; Mrs. Fry, in London; and Owen at New Lanark, have proved by experiment the influences of circumstances upon character. If the vast revenues now squandered in the detection and punishment of crime were thus applied to its prevention, hopes might justly be entertained of its gradual extinction from society. A heavy responsibility rests with the government if they neglect to employ the means in their power to form the future generations in virtue; for crime, like all other phenomena that surround us, is produced by natural causes. These have now been made apparent; remove them and you remove the effect.* But the true origin of evil being hitherto unknown, it naturally fell

* "Withdraw the circumstances which tend to create crime in the human character, and crime will not be created. Replace them with such as are calculated to form habits of order, regularity, temperance, industry, and these qualities will be produced." (Essay 2.)

[illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

mission is reserved to this age; aroused from the long apathy produced by an ignorant theology, it is for us to struggle energetically with the causes of evil, and by continued exertions to remove them. We will not despair by repeated failure; but convinced of the truth of our opinions, we shall proceed on our way, undismayed by difficulty and undaunted by opposition.

Such were the "New Views" set forth in the 'Essays on the Formation of Character.' Mr. Owen circulated them privately amongst his friends, "with a view of obtaining partners who would assist and not retard my intended future operations, and who would not exact from those they employed too much labour for too little wages. Such partners I found possessing these qualities to a greater extent than I had anticipated."

One of the first to join him was Mr. Walker, of Arno's Grove; he was a wealthy member of the Society of Friends. He was a man of considerable natural endowments and of highly cultivated tastes; he had never been engaged in business; he was deeply imbued with the noble spirit of charity and active benevolence by which the Friends are so honourably distinguished; at the same time, a liberal education abroad had divested him of those peculiarities and that narrowness of spirit so common to sectaries. Owen proposed to form a company to purchase New Lanark; the shares were to be £10,000 each. Mr. Walker took three, and remained in the firm till his death; Jeremy Bentham, then at the zenith of his fame, was also induced to accept a share. His recluse habits had intensified the

nervousness of his temperament; it was painful to him to meet any but those who were his immediate friends, it was with difficulty that he could find resolution to encounter a stranger. "It was at length decided," says Owen, "that I was to come to his hermit-like retreat at a particular hour, and that I was upon entering to proceed upstairs, and that we were to meet half-way upon the stairs. I pursued these instructions, and he in great trepidation met me, shaking my hand, while his whole frame was agitated with excitement. He hastily said, 'Well, well, it is all over,—we are introduced; come into my study,' and when I was fairly in and he had requested me to be seated, he appeared to be relieved from an arduous and formidable undertaking." He placed £10,000 in the new firm, and his friends assert that it was the only successful enterprise in which he was ever engaged. Owen's opinion of Bentham was not very flattering; he speaks of him contemptuously as a mere speculator, who had little knowledge of the world except through books. It is true, he passed a life of well-intended industry in endeavouring to amend particular laws, but his mind was superficial, for he was not able, like Owen, to pierce below the substance of things, and to remove the causes of evil by striking at their foundation. It is but fair to add that Bentham reciprocated these sentiments: "Owen," said he, "begins in vapour and ends in smoke. He is a great braggadocio; his mind is a maze of confusion, and he avoids coming to particulars. He is always the same, says the same things over and over again; he built some small houses, and people who had no houses of their own went to live in those houses, and

he calls this success."* Owen was soon afterwards joined by four others. Among the last to enter the firm was William Allen. Allen was one of the most active philanthropists of the age; he was a member of the Society of Friends, but, unlike Walker, he had not had the advantage of early contact with the world; his parents were poor, and he was placed in business; he had a natural taste for physical sciences, and the knowledge he possessed of chemistry led to his employment in the chemical works in Plough Court; in time he rose to be a partner, and acquired considerable wealth. He was also appointed a lecturer in Guy's Hospital, a place he held for many years. There were few works of charity in which he was not engaged. He was early associated with Wilberforce in his efforts for the abolition of Negro traffic; he determined, with the help of Providence, to abstain from the use of sugar till the slave trade should be abolished; the required assistance was mercifully vouchsafed during forty-three years.† Allen was not at first inclined to join with Owen in an

* Works, vol. x. p. 570.

† 'Sketches,' by Dunne, p. 77. Upon one occasion his strength was sorely tried. He went to Vienna, to urge the claims of philanthropy upon the Congress. He was honoured with an interview by the Emperor of Russia. "I was sensible," he says, "during the whole of the interview of a precious covering of the Lord's Spirit, and it seemed so to increase that I gave up speaking of outward matters, and the conversation turned entirely upon what related to a better country. The Emperor asked me if I would not take some tea with him, to which I readily assented; he rang his little handbell and the servant came and received his orders. Two cups were brought in, but mine had sugar in it. The Emperor immediately ordered it to be changed, and this led me to speak further of the poor Africans; but we soon came again upon religious topics, and these were the subjects on which he delighted to dwell. . . .

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We saw at some time a [illegible] where I knocked down and [illegible] for the [illegible] preservation. The Emperor [illegible] to me. [illegible] Life of [illegible] vol. [illegible] p. 263

* "[illegible] he writes in his Journal, 'considering whether it might be right for me to yield to the pressing solicitations of Owen, Fox, Grubb, and Walker to join in the Lanark concern, for the sake of keeping up this most interesting establishment for preserving the morals and promoting the comfort and happiness of the workpeople, and I trust I felt what would warrant me to go as far as I did. The parties came under an engagement to secure me from loss for one year, and that they would take my shares if I felt uneasy and disposed to relinquish them on my giving notice on the 9th month next."

As soon as Owen had completed these arrangements he returned to Glasgow. His former partners had heard nothing of his proceedings in London; they expected to purchase the mills for £40,000, a price far below their value; on the morning of the sale, however, Owen made a private offer of £60,000; the property was finally knocked down to him and his friends for £114,000. One hope still remained; perhaps the purchase-money might not be forthcoming; but this hope was soon dispelled when it was declared who were the members of the new firm. It was well known that Mr. Walker could have bought the whole concern for himself twice over. To add to the mortification of the Scottish partners, they had prepared a banquet to celebrate what they expected would have been their triumph; a sarcastic friend, who was a guest, gave, among other toasts of a similar kind, the health of the gentlemen who had so successfully sold for £114,000 a property they had valued at £40,000.

Owen proceeded with his friends to New Lanark; their reception was most enthusiastic; the people took the horses from their carriage and drew it in triumph to the village. When the affairs were investigated it was found that the profits since 1809 had amounted to £32,000 a year, besides the interest of five per cent. upon the capital engaged.* Allen awaited the result of the sale with impatience; he was very anxious that Owen might be the purchaser, "in order that his noble plans for ameliorating the condition of the labouring classes may be maintained." The sale

* Sargant, 'Life of Owen.'

took place in Glasgow on the 31st December, 1813; the result was not known in London until the 4th of January. "May the Divine blessing attend the undertaking!" ejaculates Allen, "and may we be kept humble and cautious! When my mind centres down solidly under the consideration of it, I feel peace."

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION.

"Proverbium est: Adolescens juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab eâ."—*Liber Proverbiorum*, cap. xxii.

OWEN now set to work with energy to carry his plans into fuller operation. His first care was to erect a school; it was two stories high; the ground floor was appropriated to infants. Upstairs there were two large rooms for the more advanced pupils; the largest was surrounded by a gallery except on one side, where a pulpit stood; it was intended for a lecture or music room, and also for religious purposes on Sunday. It was there that Owen delivered his inaugural address on the 1st of January, 1816, in which he explained the object of the new building, and painted in fervent language the vast results he anticipated. These, he said, are not likely to be limited to the improvement in knowledge and morals of an isolated manufacturing community; it is an experiment which, if successful, will produce a social revolution as radical as it will be beneficial; it is about to be shown how

easily the ignorance can be removed which, in all preceding ages of the world's history, has produced class ascendency and religious tyranny. It is to ignorance also that the immoral propensities are mainly to be attributed which still farther degrade and oppress a great proportion of mankind. Henceforth the formation of character will be regarded as of equal importance with a sound education; and thus there will be produced a new race of men, superior to any that have lived, surrounded by greater blessings and animated by a higher destiny.

But, to effect this great reform, it is necessary to begin with the earliest infancy, in order that the character may escape the taint of existing evils. With this view Owen determined to receive the children into the school from the moment they could walk. They were then placed under the care of a young girl named Molly Young, who had special qualifications for the charge. She was only seventeen years of age; her intelligence enabled her to keep the objects of the institution strictly in view; to this she united an inexhaustible forbearance of temper, and a boundless love for children; these rare qualities enabled her to accomplish her difficult task. Contrary to the universal practice of nearly every school in England at that time, harshness was to be entirely laid aside; what could not be done by kindness was not to be attempted by punishment; knowledge was henceforth to be associated only with the most pleasing recollections of childhood. The Infant School included all who were below four years of age. There were three female attendants; the affections of each child were first

secured by kindness, and then its curiosity was stimulated by conversation. Figures of animals and birds were painted round the room; they were as large as life, and executed by a lady of some artistic talent. Besides this, there was an extensive collection of natural objects from the garden and fields. The children were encouraged to ask questions themselves, and insensibly their intelligence was awakened, while at the same time they acquired a variety of useful knowledge. In summer they were taken for long walks through the fields; the natural objects around them furnished ample subject for instruction, which was skilfully conveyed to them in the midst of the healthy enjoyment of the country.

In winter the enclosed area in front of the school formed a playground, into which the children were turned when they became tired of their conversational lesson indoors. In bad weather the whole ground-floor was appropriated from time to time during the day for a play-room. No lesson lasted for more than three-quarters of an hour,* and everything was done for amusement till the child was six years old;† yet by that age they had learned the alphabet, and their interest was thoroughly aroused.

To right and left of the Infant School were rooms occupied by classes for children, from four to six and from six to eight years of age respectively; they were taught geography at four years old. The rooms upstairs were appropriated to those who were eight or more years of age; there the boys were taught writing

* R. D. Owen, 'Outline of the System of Education,' 1823.

† 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 140.

and arithmetic, and the girls besides learned to sew and to knit. Two hundred and fifty to three hundred children might be seen busily at work at their respective desks. One of the most amusing and exciting lessons was in geography; a large map of the world hung upon the wall; upon it there were no divisions for countries, nor names of towns. One of the children, holding a white wand, stood before it; the rest were assembled round in a row. The holder of the wand had to point to the place named by any of the other children, and if he was unable to do so, he had to resign his post to the child who had puzzled him; in this manner the attention of the whole class was maintained, and the proficiency that resulted was remarkable. An admiral who visited the school said that, though he had sailed round the world, he could not answer many of the questions he had heard, and to which a child not six years of age easily replied.

It may be readily supposed that this new system of education could not have been conducted by a dominie of the old school. It would have been impossible to induce him to lay aside the rod of office. Kindness was no part of the old method, and no one in England had, as yet, imagined it possible to make education attractive.

The old schoolmaster was replaced by a poor weaver, named James Buchanan. This simple-hearted man had gone through a severe training in the matrimonial school, where he had learned the most perfect submission and humility; besides these necessary qualifications, he possessed also a strong natural love for children, and a patience that the trials of his domestic life

had made quite inexhaustible. His literary qualifications were not of a high order; indeed, he could hardly read or write; but this deficiency he soon repaired, and probably he was not less suited to his task because his capacity and learning remained nearly on a level with those of his pupils. When the success of the new system of education had been fully established, Owen permitted Buchanan to go to London, where he was employed by some philanthropists to found a school in Brewer's Green, Westminster. This occurred in 1819. It was the first Infant School ever established in England.*

The place left vacant at New Lanark was supplied by a lad of sixteen years of age; he had been trained in the new schools, and had thoroughly imbibed their spirit; he not only possessed the ability but also the temper so necessary for a teacher of youth, and the vigour natural to his age was animated by a generous enthusiasm for the cause in which he laboured. This lad was assisted by six or eight teachers. The education continued till the children were ten years

* "I do not know," writes Wilderspin of Infant Schools, "with whom the idea first originated, nor do I think it is of much importance to know this; the point is, who first brought it into action. The first infant school that we heard of in this country was established at Westminster, in the year 1819. The master of that institution is J. Buchanan, who came from Mr. Owen's establishment at New Lanark, where an infant school had been previously formed by that gentleman. The gentlemen who established the school at Westminster were the following:—Henry Brougham, Esq. M.P., James Mill, Esq., John Smith, Esq. M.P., the Marquis of Lansdowne, Z. Macaulay, Esq., Thomas Babington, Esq., Lord Dacre, Sir Thomas Baring, Wm. Leake, Esq. M.P., Henry Hase, Esq., Benj. Smith, Esq., John Walker, Esq., and Joseph Wilson, Esq. ('Infant Education,' by Samuel Wilderspin; London, 1825, p. 8, compare also p. 234.)

of age, and then they entered the manufactory. Every facility was afforded to enable them afterwards to continue their education. Skilled masters and mistresses attended every evening to give instruction in the usual branches of learning and in the useful arts.* To these were also added classes for adults. The children were taught to dance at two years old, and to sing at four. They afterwards learned instrumental music. Nothing can more conduce to a happy frame of mind than these joyous accomplishments. When the business of the day was over, the people would assemble in one of the large rooms and pass the evening in singing and dancing.† As many as seventy couples might be seen standing up together. There was a concert every week, and 150 voices sometimes joined to sing the popular ballads of Scotland.

With such amusements within their reach the people could not regret the loss of the ginshop, with its maddening pleasures and fatal consequences. Owen caused all the children to be well drilled; they took great pleasure in the exercise, and it was found to conduce to health and personal grace. Many of these proceedings, particularly the martial exercises and profane dancing, were displeasing to the Quaker partners. Owen however persisted, and finally prevailed.

* The diminution of theft alone amounted to £700 a year, which was the cost of the educational establishment. (Owen's Journal, vol. iv. p. 191.) The parents had to contribute threepence a month for each child. All the advantages of the schools were extended to the neighbours upon the same terms. (Macnab, 'New Views Examined,' p. 111; New Lanark Address, 1816.)

† The dancing-master was a glazier. Some of the children had shoes, others bare feet; they generally wore the kilt. (Griscom, 'Travels,' vol. ii. p. 378; Sargant, 'Life of Owen,' p. 213.)

I have already described the measures Mr. Owen had taken for the improvement of the moral and social condition of the workmen. In 1819 he made a very important addition; he opened a public kitchen and dining-room, by which the waste of separate cooking was avoided; he calculated that the people saved by this means no less than £4000 or £5000 a year.* In the upper story of the new building there was a library, reading and ball rooms; the whole was heated by hot air.† These improvements went hand-in-hand with the greatest commercial success; the business proceeded with uninterrupted prosperity, and upon an increasing scale; it became so extensive that £8000 a year was spent upon repairs alone.‡ The twist manufactured enjoyed a high repute.§

Such then was the method pursued by Owen, and from which he achieved the most remarkable success. For many years New Lanark became the wonder of philanthropists. Great peers, foreign princes, and royal representatives travelled express from London to witness the reformed community on the banks of the Clyde.|| Whenever the condition of the poor was brought before Parliament, Owen's name was men-

* Griscom, 'Travels,' vol. ii. p. 384; Macnab, 'New Views Examined,' p. 71.

† Griscom, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 304; R. D. Owen, 'System of Education.'

‡ 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 135. § Journal, iv. 191.

|| There was an average of 2000 visitors per annum. The Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia passed two nights with Owen. He was accompanied by his physician, Sir Alex. Crighton, and nine or ten of his suite. The Duke offered to transplant Owen and an unlimited number of operatives to Russia. Princes John and Maximilian and the Duke of Holstein-Oldenburg also visited New Lanark; likewise the

tioned and his success at New Lanark adduced in proof of a possibility of reform. The King of Saxony presented him with a gold medal.* The King of Prussia read the 'Essays on the Formation of Character,' and honoured the author with an autograph letter of thanks.† The Duke of Kent sent Dr. Macnab to New Lanark specially to investigate the subject; the Duke was so interested by the report he received that he intended to go there himself, but unfortunately he was prevented by death. Mr. Griscom, an American traveller, visited Owen, in March, 1819; he describes the village as remarkable for its cleanness, and the people for their healthy and cheerful appearance. He received a hearty welcome from Owen, whose manners, notwithstanding his celebrity, were most unaffected and cordial; he was at once invited to spend a few days at Braxfield,‡ that he might carry on his inquiries at leisure; he accepted the invitation, and found a very agreeable host, for Owen was at all times ready to enter into a full exposition of his opinions, which then possessed some charm of novelty. He had "the candour and openness of a child,"§ and courted the fullest investigation of his system; he listened patiently to every objection, and answered with moderation and temper; "he neither interrupts nor contradicts one; his good humour suffers no perturbation either from argument, wit, or ridicule." Having investigated the establishment

foreign Ambassadors Barons Jacobi and Just. ('Autobiography,' vol. i. pp. 145–147.)

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 151. † Sargant.

‡ The name of Owen's country-house.

§ Griscom, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 375.

with care, Mr. Griscom concludes:—"There is not, I apprehend, to be found in any part of the world a manufacturing village in which so much order, good government, tranquillity, and rational happiness prevail. It affords an eminent and instructive example of the good that may be effected by well-directed effects to promote the real comforts, and I may add the morality of the indigent and labouring classes."

About the same time a deputation was sent from Leeds, in order to inquire into the details of the system adopted at New Lanark, and to determine whether it could be applied elsewhere for the relief of the poor. The Report states that the establishment is "conducted in a manner superior to any other the deputation ever witnessed," and that it "dispenses more happiness than perhaps any other institution in the kingdom." "Mr. Owen," it adds, "appears to be considered the landmark of goodness and beneficence."* Indeed, the people could not fail to be thankful for the exertions so zealously made in their behalf.† The children regarded Owen with the most sincere affection, and their parents remarked with delight the improvement which was made in knowledge and happiness.‡ Although the wages given to the workmen were lower than were paid elsewhere, it caused no discontent among the people,§ and New Lanark escaped the disturbances and protracted strikes so general among cotton-spinners in England and Glasgow. ||

* Macnab, p. 100.

† Mr. Smith, M.P., described the gratitude of the people as one of the most pleasing symptoms. (Macnab, p. 51.)

‡ 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 138. § Macnab, p. 130.

|| The officers of justice have not in a single instance, during the last

Indeed, the people experienced no distress whatever, and were able to form a fund for relief in time of sickness and old age.*

Notwithstanding such favourable results, Mr. Owen's plans encountered very general hostility. Foolish and lying reports were industriously circulated against his establishment. One gentleman heard that a mill had been burned to the ground, and devoutly expressed the hope that a similar fate might befall the whole of "an establishment which has been the means of turning the brains of many worthy members of society." Another, alarmed by the possible tendency of prosperity unduly to stimulate the reproductive passions, had been credibly informed that it was a part of Owen's plan to destroy all infants above a certain proportion. A third had ascertained that the depravity existing at New Lanark was the talk of the whole country.† Religionists doubted the possibility of breeding virtue by any carnal device; they were discomfited to find that it was so amenable to natural causes. Men of business were astonished that a practical man should fall a prey to such visionary schemes as the amelioration of mankind; such follies were suited, indeed, to a mere closet student, dreaming away life among books as worthless as himself. But it was notorious that Owen had risen from a low origin; that he had pushed his way to fame and fortune; that his business prospered in his hands. It was clear to them that success had turned his head.

fifteen years, executed any criminal process in New Lanark. (Address of Owen's Committee, August, 1819.)

* Allen's Journal.

† 'Observations,' by a Lover of Truth. Edinburgh, 1819.

But by far the most violent opposition proceeded from that large class of persons to whom nature has given much piety, but little sense. It must be acknowledged that Owen was at no pains to dissemble his opinions; indeed, he adopted every means in his power to attack the religion of the people, nor was he at all times careful to adopt a reverent tone. The fact appears to be that he sincerely thought all existing religions injurious to society; they were based upon moral responsibility, a doctrine he energetically repudiated, and they seemed to him to have produced upon the whole far more evil than good. A part of his life, therefore, was devoted to a crusade against religion, and an attempt to found another based upon Fatalism. It was very natural that such conduct should arouse the indignation and alarm of many excellent persons; to them no improvement in morals could compensate for the rejection of saving faith; and the terrible fear for ever haunted their minds lest the people who were under the guidance of Owen, having gained the whole world, should lose their own souls.

Yet there does not appear to have been more than the average risk of this calamity. However much Mr. Owen's opinions diverged from those generally professed, he was perfectly tolerant to others. At New Lanark there were four religious denominations, and each enjoyed the ministrations of a pastor; a Gaelic clergyman was supported by Owen, for the benefit of those who did not understand English;* in the schools Friday was appropriated to religious exercises and instruction; the evening classes closed with the singing

* Macnab, *op. cit.* p. 58.

of a hymn; on Sunday the large room was used for religious worship and sacred music. A traveller has described with evident enthusiasm the scene he witnessed on Sunday; he beheld the entire population proceeding to their several churches; he noticed the cheerfulness of the children; he admired the decorum of the young men and maidens, and the reverent bearing of the aged. No town in Scotland bore greater evidence of religious life.

Mr. Allen had entered into the partnership with reluctance; he was allowed nine months for consideration before he finally threw in his lot with the rest; during this interval he went to New Lanark to inspect the business; he had much very painful conversation with Owen on the subjects of philosophy and religion, and it terminated with what he calls "a heavy parting."* Notwithstanding his doubts he determined to remain in the firm: "The wide field of usefulness where we have the control of 3000 people; the strength I might have in opposing any infidel plans of R. O.; all these have turned the scale, and I must leave the result in the hands of Infinite Wisdom, and O that I and mine may be under his protection!" †

In drawing up the articles he therefore caused it to be specially stipulated that "nothing should be introduced tending to disparage the Christian religion, or to undermine the authority of the Holy Scriptures." The Bible was to be used in the schools, and no religious instruction given except from it, and "without note or comment." Owen was at first very much averse to

* Journal, Aug. 14, 1814.

† 'Memoir' by Sherman, 26th Dec. 1814.

these conditions, for he would have preferred an exclusively secular education, but he finally yielded, for Allen would not submit to any compromise. It was farther agreed that no book should be introduced into the library until it had been sanctioned by the partners. It was thus that the Christian element was guarded, and "that one thing" provided "without which parts, acquirements, and benevolence are unavailing."*

At length the articles were formally signed in December 1814. "Glad should I have been," writes Allen, "could I have avoided it, but considering all the religious feelings which have attended my mind on this subject for a year past, I have considered it my duty to join, and signed it in the faith that I was brought into it for some purpose not seen as yet." It was not long before the clear light was revealed; he had been guided into the firm by the hand of Providence, that he might stand in the breach and oppose the advancing assault of infidelity. It was indeed a painful task, for Owen was his friend; but Allen was not to be deterred by personal considerations from the exercise of a public duty. "We came into the concern," he wrote on one occasion, "not to form a manufactory of infidels, but to support a benevolent character in plans of a very different nature, in which the happiness of millions and the cause of morality and virtue are deeply concerned."

"I am resolved," he adds, "not to continue in this concern of New Lanark unless it be most narrowly watched by some one in whom we can thoroughly rely."

In April 1818 he proceeded to New Lanark, accompanied by Foster and Gibbs, in order "to discover

* Sherman, *op. cit.*

whether any attempt is making there to weaken the faith of the people in divine revelation." Before they set out they had reason to believe that such was not the case, and this opinion was amply confirmed by what they witnessed. Upon their arrival they were received by Owen with his well-known cordiality; he was at no pains to dissemble his private opinions, and Allen "sustained many disputes with him," which caused him "deep exercises of mind." He discovered that Owen had refused leave to form a Bible Society, but the opposition could not have been violent, for that important institution was subsequently established by the people themselves, and Mrs. Owen and family were among the subscribers. The clergyman of the parish described the moral state of the people as highly satisfactory, and "he did not think that Owen's principles took root among them." These comfortable tidings were confirmed by the testimony of other ministers. The Quakers urged the pastors to guard their fold with zeal against the attacks of the enemy, and to "inform them if any attempt was made to introduce anything contrary to revealed religion."

The people presented an address to the London partners in which they said, "The care which is taken in gratuitously educating our children, and the humane treatment we experience, are advantages which call forth our warmest expressions of gratitude. We are sensible that our circumstances are superior to all other cotton spinners." Allen replied in a speech of three-quarters of an hour, in the course of which he fully explained his religious views, and the anxiety he felt that the minds of the children should be early imbued

with the truths of revealed religion. "From all that I have heard or seen," he said, "I feel the deepest conviction that in point of moral and religious feeling, as well as in temporal comfort, no manufacturing population of equal extent can be compared with New Lanark." Allen looked back to this visit with great pleasure. He writes in his journal, "The investigation which we made at Lanark has been very satisfactory, and I have had much peace in the public opportunity I had with the workpeople. I begin to hope that even this undertaking may be blessed, and that perhaps we were permitted to enter into it to prevent New Lanark becoming a seminary of infidels. How thankful shall I be if this is the case!"

Allen's fears were now allayed for some time. In 1822, however, there seems to have been renewed cause for alarm; it was found that Owen had deviated from the articles of partnership in the matter of education, and Allen not unreasonably insisted that he should immediately return to his engagements. In this protestation Allen was supported by Mr. Walker, who would not have interfered without good cause. The dispute was at length arranged; for although Owen, contrary to his custom, at first expressed himself rather warmly, he at length consented to submit the whole business of education to the management of the London partners. The people, however, had not suffered from evil example, for when Allen visited them he "generally adverted to the subject of the Bible, and was pleased to see that they universally not only had the Bible, but that they read in it, and many of them daily. We saw a number of religious

books among them, and I was led to give them serious advice as way opened." But it was impossible that harmony could long exist between two such men as Allen and Owen. In the following year a meeting of partners in Plough Court declared that the articles had been again violated, and proposed that the dispute should be referred to arbitrators. Owen avoided this by submission. He had the mortification to find a teacher sent down from the Borough Road School to direct his educational establishment. He could not long endure to see his favourite schemes defeated, and his brilliant hopes so sadly disappointed. He retired from the firm in December 1828, and devoted his energies to a larger sphere.

Owen was not the inventor of Infant Schools, nor was he first to abolish the system of terrorism in education, or to recognise the important influence of early training upon the character and destiny of man. His merit consists in having introduced these improvements into England.

Twenty years before the outbreak of the French Revolution a young clergyman from Strasburg was appointed pastor in the Ban de la Roche. The valley was desolate,* and the peasants were ignorant. The minister of the Gospel became the pioneer of civilization. He threw a bridge across the ravine; he cut a road out into the world. He introduced agriculture; he built a school. The desert became fruitful; ignorance disappeared. Never has the Great Example inspired a nobler disciple. The benevolence of Oberlin

* The people were nearly on the brink of starvation. They were reduced to eat "herbe cuite dans du lait." ('Vie d'Oberlin,' 1867, p. 32.)

knew no bounds; his majestic piety commanded all hearts, and subdued all opposition. It is related that a conspiracy was formed to murder him. He was warned that an assassin lay in his path; he went forth to meet his fate; he held in his hand no arm but a pilgrim's staff; he had no shield but the Book of Life. The murderer rushed upon him from the ambuscade, but the weapon fell harmless to the ground; the enemy sank on his knee before the Man of God, whose nerve had not faltered, whose countenance had not changed; and begging for mercy, he received a blessing. Oberlin had unbounded confidence in Divine interposition; he decided every act of his life by lot; he carried a little ballot-box in his pocket for the purpose.* Every visitor received a text from the Sacred Book, printed upon a card. The pastor's house was decked with passages of Scripture over the doors, and upon the walls.† A map of the future world was hung up in the church;‡ his knowledge of its geography was perfect. His wife died, but she visited him in the spirit. Implicit reliance in the truth of his own opinions had not impaired his liberality for others; Christ had died for all; in Him all were saved. Beyond the grave were many worlds; the continuity of existence was unbroken; the soul progressed in each; at length it attained to the highest heaven, and en-

* He bequeathed this "oui et non" box to Mr. Blumhardt, of the Missionary Institute at Bâle ('Memoirs,' London, 1829, p. 218, note). He made a collection of the miraculous events that had happened him, which he called Providentialia.

† It appears that there is a Divine command to that effect. See Deut. vi. 6–9; xi. 18–20.

‡ Memoirs, p. 231.

tered into the presence of the Lamb. No wailings of the lost could rend the darkness, for the flames of hell were extinguished as the blood trickled from the Cross.*

Such was the earliest founder of Infant Schools. Soon after his arrival at Waldbach he persuaded some benevolent women to undertake the charge of children from two years of age; they were called *conductrices* and their main duty was to amuse the children under their care. The room was hung with pictures of animals, and with scenes from Bible History; there was a collection of natural objects to suggest conversation, and to help explanation; songs and hymns were taught; the children were thus brought up in the midst of good example and intelligent amusement.

Their parents were free to work in the fields; they had no anxiety for their children, who were better cared for by the *conductrices* than they could have been at home. Sara Banzel was the first of these benevolent women, but Louise Scheppler is the best known. It was to her that the Grand Prix Montyon was awarded as the foundress of the Salles d'Asile in France. She, however, energetically repudiated the honour of the invention. It was due, she said, to Oberlin alone; she had been but "an instrument in his hands."†

* Memoirs, p. 232. As might be expected, he was a student of Swedenborg ('Vie,' p. 174).

† 'Vie,' pp. 43, 120–124. It does not appear that Oberlin took children before two years of age (Memoirs, p. 87). Owen received them from the time they could walk ('Autobiography,' vol. i. pp. 134, 138). The *crèches* are open for their reception almost from the moment of birth.

Oberlin's merit, as an educational reformer, was not limited to the introduction of infant schools; his establishment for older children attained great celebrity; he received pupils from various places, and when the Revolution had swept away his slender patrimony he mainly supported himself by that means.* He thoroughly understood agriculture, and introduced many improvements, for which he received the Legion of Honour from Louis XVIII.† He was attached to the social system of the Moravians. Goodwill reigned among the peasants; they were all ready to help one another.‡ Oberlin proved the advantages of association, when wood became dear, he had a public stove constructed, where all the food that was required was cooked; the consumption of fuel was of course much less than in separate fires.§

The great Swiss reformer, Pestalozzi, was not favourable to infant schools.|| He considered that the parents should possess sufficient intelligence to convey the ear-

* Memoirs, p. 150. He sold the whole of his plate, and gave the proceeds to the Missionary Society for the heathen (p. 156).

† Memoirs, p. 212. He received the gold medal of the Royal Agricultural Society of Paris in acknowledgment of services rendered during fifty years to agriculture.

‡ It was their practice on Sunday after church to spend the day in charitable works. They would cultivate the ground of the sick, repair the houses of the poor, or gather in the crops of those who could not afford to pay for labour. ('Vie,' p. 52.)

§ 'Vie,' p. 82.

|| "Nature, he said, has not limited the duties of a mother merely to take care of her child's body: she is likewise in intellectual relations the first instructress of her child. The neglect of this truth has originated the custom of sending children too soon to school, and the premature efforts that are there made to advance them have done a great deal of mischief." ('Biographical Sketch,' Dublin, 1815, p. 49.)

liest lessons to their offspring, and that the education of the affections by a mother's love is of the first importance. Poverty was in his estimation a mere accident; it might be wholly removed from human society. The change, however, could not proceed from political revolutions, or from material prosperity; it must originate in the changed habits of the people.* Their intelligence must be awakened by education; the powers of their mind and body must be trained to useful occupations, by which industry may be rewarded with prosperity. He fully recognized, moreover, the power of education to form the character.† The earliest efforts of Pestalozzi were made at Neuhof, near Zurich. He collected the children of the very poor,—those who had already acquired habits of mendicity and idleness; he supplied them with food, clothing, and instruction; he lived amongst them; he partook of the same food, and shared in the same lodging. The power of his example subdued their depravity, his friendship excited their

* Biber, E. 'Life and Writings of Pestalozzi,' London, 1831, p. 12. In his youth he joined the Illuminati, a political and philosophical party, of which he afterwards became the head in Switzerland. They were freethinkers, and believed in human perfectibility. ('Pestalozzi, and Pestalozzianism,' edited by H. Barnard, New York, 1859, p. 65.) The Revolution taught Pestalozzi that the amelioration of outward circumstances will be the effect, but never can be the means, of mental and moral improvement. (Biber, p. 23.)

† "Regeneration was the object of all my wishes; I wished to restore my pupils to a purity of life and domestic relation." "Create," he adds, "in the child an habitual disposition to what is good, founded on purity of sentiment, exercise this disposition by furnishing him with frequent occasion of practising what is good, take occasion from the circumstances around him to give him positive ideas of virtue and justice, and strive that he shall attach these ideas to all the details of life;—behold what appears to me the point to which moral education reduces itself." ('Biographical Sketch,' pp. 15, 36.)

emulation. He rarely had recourse to punishment;* he mainly relied upon the power of affection. The charm of his character kindled the warmest enthusiasm among his pupils; there was no sacrifice they were not prepared to endure for him, or, at his bidding, for one another. His poverty was so great that he could procure few books; this deficiency led to his discovery of the method of teaching from natural objects, a method which for a time took deep root in the reformed educational system of Europe.† From the same cause he was led to employ one child to teach another,‡ and thus nearly simultaneously in Switzerland and India the very important assistance of monitors was brought into practice. He, however, attached less importance to learning than to habits of industry; § he employed his pupils in agriculture, and also in a cotton factory; his hope was that their industry would pay the expenses of their education,|| but in this he was disappointed;

* He could not, however, quite dispense with it. (Biog. Sketch, p. 33.)

† 'What is Pestalozzianism?' p. 19.

‡ "I speedily found assistance among my own pupils, and in estimating their different powers I made use of the most advanced among them to teach their companions what they knew themselves." (Biog. Sketch, p. 47.)

§ "At the opening of his school at Stanz he had no plan of lessons, no method, no schoolbook except one, and even this he scarcely used at all. .... The only object of his attention was to find out at each moment what instruction his children stood particularly in need of. .... The children felt excited, attracted, interested, stimulated; .... they gained little positive knowledge, but they increased daily in the love of knowledge." (Biber, p. 40.) Ramsauer, one of the pupil-teachers, writes: "There reigned much love and simplicity in the institution; the life was genial, I could almost say patriarchal. Not much was learned, it is true, but Pestalozzi was the father and the teachers were the friends of the pupils." (Barnard, 'Pestalozzi,' p. 119.)

|| "It is to the charitable efforts of Pestalozzi," says Demetz, "that

he was soon reduced to complete poverty, and his establishment had to be broken up. Yet it had not been without success; it had been the means of rescuing 100 children from destitution and corrupting influences.*

His subsequent experiments at Stauz, Burgdorf, and Yverdun procured for him greater celebrity; pupils came from all parts of Europe to learn the new system. Pestalozzi sent out teachers to every part of the world, from Russia to America; he received a vote of thanks from his own country;† Fichte pronounced his labours to be the commencement of a renovation of humanity;‡ Alexander of Russia conferred a decoration upon him;§ the King of Prussia summoned a pupil from Yverdun to arouse the intellectual faculties of Königsberg.‖

But one problem of great importance still remained to be solved. Pestalozzi was never free from pecuniary embarrassment; under his management the farms did not support the schools. It was Fellenberg who first proved that this might be accomplished, and education extended to the poor without levying a tax upon the rich. Fellenberg followed the system of Pestalozzi; his object was the same,—he sought to regenerate mankind by reforming education;** he adopted the same

we owe the establishment of agricultural colonies." "His efforts have led to the establishment of new educational institutions for rich and poor, of schools of practical agriculture, as well as of agricultural reformatories, and at the same time have regenerated the methods of popular education generally." (Barnard.)

* Biber, p. 17. † Barnard, p. 96. ‡ Barnard, p. 87.

§ 'What is Pestalozzianism?' p. 34.

‖ Barnard, p. 26. Diesterweg says that "Pestalozzi is entitled to at least half the fame of the German common schools; whatever of excellence or eminence they have they really owe to no one but him." (*Ib.*, p. 27.)

** "Fellenberg conceived that the character of all classes depended

means; he ruled by kindness and not by fear;* he strove to make the schools self-supporting; "he succeeded most happily in proving the practical needlessness of pauperism by the profit of the labour of his industrial school above its expenses."†

upon habits and principles imbibed in their education. The character of the grown-up man depends upon the age in which he lives, the class in which he is born, and the education he has received in that class, comprehending in that word not only his book instruction, but the moral training and the companions with whom he has been trained, or those with whom he has associated." ('What Fellenberg has done,' p. 49.) "La consolidation," writes Fellenberg, "de l'ordre public de l'Europe en particulier, dépend de ce que se fera, pour que chaque homme de la classe des gouvernés, aussi bien que celle des gouvernants, puisse acquérir les habitudes, les vertus et les connaissances qui rendront chacun propre à la place que la Providence lui aura assignée par sa naissance, et par les dons naturels qui lui seront tombés en partage." (Capo-d'Istria, Rapport, 1815, p. 68.

* "Il n'y a pas d'autre récompense que la satisfaction et l'approbation du maître. Toutes les distinctions qui peuvent flatter la vanité et faire naître l'envie sont bannies de l'institut; les punitions corporelles n'ont été nécessaires que rarement, avec les plus jeunes, et seulement au début de leur séjour à Hofwyl." (Rengger, Rapport, 1815, pp. 59, 60.) "Tous leurs rapports avec leurs maîtres sont de confiance et d'affection : c'est sur les sentiments et non sur la crainte que leur obéissance est fondée" (p. 65).

† Prof. Schiedler; see 'What Fellenberg has done for Education,' p. 90. "Nous n'affirmons pas encore, avec M. de Fellenberg, qu'un pareil établissement pourra se soutenir par ses propres moyens, et que tous les frais qu'il exigera dans les commencements seront remboursés par la suite. Nous nous en tenons à l'expérience déjà faite, et nous disons que les dépenses occasionnées par l'école d'Hofwyl dans les trois premières années, c'est-à-dire les plus coûteuses, ne s'élèvent pas au-dessus de la somme que les communes, les associations de bienfaisance ou les particuliers charitables sont appelés à distribuer pour le soutien des familles pauvres de leurs villages." (Rengger, p. 111.) "That the farms cultivated by them (Fellenberg's pupils), succeed perfectly, the inspection of his accounts clearly demonstrates." (Report of H. Brougham, Printed Papers, vol. iv., 1818.) M. Véricour ('Des Instituts Agricoles d'Hofwyl,' p. 11) says that the experiment of Fellenberg shows "que l'on peut trouver dans le travail des pauvres convenablement appliqué, et

In England education was regarded with suspicion, —almost with dread; it was thought to be an engine of destruction, before which the faith and the Constitution must perish. These opinions are by no means extinct even yet, but fifty years ago they were propounded with solemn force.* The reformers had limited their exertions mainly to extend the mechanical arts of reading and writing, by the introduction of a cheaper system of teaching. Dr. Bell had brought his discovery of monitors from India.

The practice itself was not indeed new; Pestalozzi was already instructing paupers by that method at Neuhof; in England it had long been in use in an elementary form; † but it was Dr. Bell who first, of Englishmen, developed it into a system, who first tested

en supposant que leur aptitude au travail fût développée habilement et de très-bonne heure, des moyens plus que suffisants pour pourvoir à tous les frais de leur éducation et de leur existence, jusqu'à ce qu'ils fussent rendus à la société, dès qu'ils pourraient y occuper une place honorable." "Ainsi," he continues, "l'extinction graduelle et enfin totale de la mendicité ne demanderait que des avances avec la certitude de les voir remboursées par le travail des pauvres."

* It was this which induced Dr. Bell to write in the second edition of his 'Experiment in Education' (p. 60), "It is not proposed that the children of the poor be educated in an expensive manner, or even taught to write and to cipher. Utopian schemes for the universal diffusion of general knowledge would soon realize the fable of the belly and the other members of the body, and confound that distinction of ranks and classes of society on which the general welfare hinges, and the happiness of the lower orders no less than that of the higher depends. . . . . There is a risk of elevating, by an indiscriminate education, the minds of those doomed to the drudgery of daily labour, above their condition, and thereby rendering them discontented and unhappy in their lot. It may suffice to teach the generality, on an economical plan, to read their Bible and understand the doctrines of our holy religion." (! !)

† See Joseph Fox on Lancaster, p. 11.

its practical importance in his own school at Madras, and who first laid the results before the English public.*

* "I soon found that if ever the school was to be brought into good order .... it must be done either by instructing ushers in the economy of such a seminary, or by youths from among the pupils trained for the purpose. I was compelled in the end to adhere solely to the latter." (p. 9.) "My success in training my young pupils in habits of strict discipline and prompt obedience exceeded my expectations, and every step of my progress has confirmed and riveted in my mind the superiority of this new mode of conducting a school through the medium of the scholars themselves" (p. 10). "After this manner the school teaches itself, and as matters stand the schoolmaster alone is essentially necessary at this school" (p. 25, 'An Experiment in Education,' by Dr. Andrew Bell, London, 1797). Mr. Lancaster's school was opened in 1798 (Epitome of his Life, New Haven, 1833, p. 5). He writes in 1803 ('Improvements in Education,' by Joseph Lancaster, p. 65), "I ought not to close my account without acknowledging the obligation I lie under to Dr. Bell, of the Male Asylum at Madras, who so nobly gave up his time and liberal salary that he might perfect that institution. He published a tract in 1798 [it was 1797], entitled 'An Experiment in Education,' suggesting a system by which a school or family may teach itself under the superintendence of the master or parent. From this publication I have adopted several useful hints. . . . . I much regret that I was not acquainted with the beauty of his system till somewhat advanced in my plan. If I had known it, it would have saved me much trouble and some retrograde movements. As a confirmation of Mr. Bell's plan I have succeeded with one nearly similar in a school attended by almost 300 children." At a later period Mr. Lancaster thus advertises:—"Joseph Lancaster, of the Free School, Borough Road, London, having invented, under the blessing of Divine Providence, a new and mechanical system of education for the use of schools, feels anxious to disseminate the knowledge of its advantages through the United Kingdom." (See 'Quarterly Review,' Oct. 1811.) In the Epitome of his Life (1833, p. 6), he claims again the merit of the "invention" of teaching by the means of children. He adds (p. 44), "Dr. Bell would only have been a dumb-bell all his life if I had not put a clapper into his empty head." The dispute between Dr. Bell and Mr. Lancaster was long and acrimonious. The question will perhaps continue to be decided according to the political proclivities of the disputants. If any reader should feel disposed to be impartial, I recommend him to read the first edition of Dr. Bell's book before he decides against the claims of that gentleman.

His work was published in 1797. A year or two afterwards it fell into the hands of Joseph Lancaster, a youthful convert to the Society of Friends. Lancaster, when twenty years of age, had set up a school in an obscure part of London; there he attempted to teach the children of the very poor, and to live out of the profits; a season of adversity fell upon the parents, and some could no longer pay for the instruction of their children; but Mr. Lancaster determined, if possible, not to withhold the blessings of education; he adopted many ingenious devices to diminish the expenses of his school, so that the amount he received from those who were still able to pay might be sufficient to defray the expenses of those who could do so no longer. His labours attracted the attention of Mrs. Fry;* subscriptions were raised, and in a short time sufficient had been collected to enable Mr. Lancaster to open a free school;† the King became his patron; great noblemen gave large sums. Such was the skill with which Mr. Lancaster economized the funds, that for every £1 he received he was able to conduct the education of three children for a year;‡ one master and one book were sufficient to teach 1000 children.§ In 1813 he began an education propaganda;‖ he travelled to every part of England, delivering lectures, arousing the torpid, pressing upon all classes the paramount claims of education. His energy was not im-

* 'Improvements,' third edition, p. 3.

† This occurred in 1801. ('Quarterly Review,' vol. vi.)

‡ See Epitome of his Life.

§ *Ibid.* 300 children can be educated for 7*s.* per annum each; for a greater number it may be reduced to 4*s.* per annum for each. ('An Account of the Progress of Joseph Lancaster,' p. 2.)

‖ *Ibid.*

paired by bashfulness; he was quite alive to his own merits; he even claimed more than he deserved. But the Church had already caught the alarm. Mr. Lancaster was a dissenter; among many erroneous views, he held that there was "a grand basis" of doctrine upon which all Christians could meet.* Archdeacon Daubeny lost no time in exposing this delusion; in the Lancastrian schools natural religion was taught; besides this, the children were instructed in the Bible, a course which it was thought would secure their adhesion to Christianity; but a mere Christian is a poor creature if he be not a Catholic. What soul can pass through the storms of life, and reach the farther shore in safety, except in Peter's boat? The Bible therefore without the Church can be of no avail.† Mr. Lancaster's system can "answer no one purpose so much as that of amalgamating (if we may be allowed the expression) the great body of the people into one great deistical compound."‡ Although Mr. Lancaster might not be an atheist himself, "he was a professed rejecter of the essential doctrines and sacraments of the Church," and in some respects he bore a striking resemblance to Julian the Apostate; § it was evident that he was the dupe of deists, and "under the imposing guise of philanthropy" was used as a tool for an insidious attack upon religion.|| Such was the language to which, sixty years ago, sober people listened

* 'Improvements,' p. 25.

† Charge by Archdeacon Daubeny, 1807, p. 37. Compare Charge, 1812, p. 56.

‡ A Sermon preached in St. Paul's by Archdeacon Daubeny, 1809, p. 17.

§ *Ibid.*

|| Charge by Archdeacon Daubeny, 1806, p. 25.

in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Yet the denunciations of this silly priest produced an excellent effect; the only way "the deceitful institution"* could be put down was by using the powerful agency of the Church to establish a rival system. Dr. Bell, after his return from India, had retired to a country parish; he was called from his retreat, and his name given to an educational movement based upon the doctrines and principles of Anglicanism. The rivalry between Bell and Lancaster was highly stimulating to both; the great political parties had each its champion; the 'Quarterly Review' patronized Bell;† the 'Edinburgh' thundered out the praise of Lancaster. There were many who cared little which system had the greatest merit, provided the people were educated.‡

When Mr. Owen was struggling up to fortune in Manchester, he spared from his still slender capital £1000 for Lancaster and £500 for Dr. Bell. Though he admired their efforts, he did not adopt their example at New Lanark. Saving expense entered little into his

* Sermon, p. 17.

† See numbers for Oct. 1811, April 1816.

‡ It is worthy of remark that the cause of education has been mainly advanced during the last half-century by the efforts of the clergy. They have laboured with a zeal no discouragement could daunt, and at a personal sacrifice which occasionally bordered on the heroic. (See Fraser's Report, No. 55, Agricultural Labour Commission.) If they could be induced to overcome their opposition to secular education, the value of their labours would be greatly enhanced. However widely we may differ from them in matters of opinion, however much we may be tempted to ridicule their peculiar habits and their startling prejudices, we must admit that they are distinguished beyond all other men by a noble enthusiasm in the cause of humanity,—that their lives are adorned with a purity and grace which the supercilious affectation of modern intellectualism would do well to imitate.

calculations, he therefore had no "monitors;" his design was to form character, which could not be done except by trained teachers, with very exceptional qualifications. Mr. Lancaster availed himself of the stimulus of ambition and of the fear of punishment to an extent before unknown; he exhausted his ingenuity to elaborate torture, to excite envy and to stimulate vanity.* Mr. Owen adopted a different method; at New Lanark punishment was, as we have seen, unknown; there was no reward but the inward satisfaction of well-doing, and the approbation of a teacher who was beloved. It was Owen who first proved to Englishmen that, in the training of youth, love is a stronger power than fear; that if education is to be beneficial it must first be made attractive; if it is to influence the character for good, it must not excite terror or inflame opposition.

Oberlin began his labours at Waldbach in 1767. The first infant school established in England was in

* Dr. Bell did not claim the merit of this discovery. "For months together it has not been found necessary to inflict a single punishment upon any of the culprits. When a bad, lying boy comes to school, the teacher of the lower classes must find a good boy to take care of him, teach him right principles like the other boys." ('Experiment,' 1797, p. 27.) This was also the custom at Hofwyl: "Ceux auxquels on a reconnu un mauvais caractère, ou de mauvais penchants, sont entourés d'élèves d'une moralité à toute épreuve et qui doivent exercer sur eux une influence salutaire." ('Des Instituts Agricoles d'Hofwyl,' par R. de Véricour, p. 11.) In Mr. Lancaster's book he has minutely described his system of rewards and punishments. In the course of a lecture before the Royal Institution Mr. Coleridge read the most salient passages from that work. He threw the book indignantly upon the table, and exclaimed, "No boy who has been subject to punishments like these will stand in fear of Newgate, or feel any horror at the thought of a slave ship." ('Quarterly Review,' Oct. 1811.)

1819, but the teacher came from the banks of the Clyde, not from the Ban de la Roche; he was sent by the founder of the Rational System, not by the collector of Providentialia. Pestalozzi opened Neuhof to the poor in 1775, and drew all men to him by love. Lancaster began his school in 1798, and spent large sums on toys, ribands, and medals. Owen delivered his inaugural address on the 1st January, 1816, and declared that henceforth there should be no reward but a good conscience, no punishment but self-condemnation.

While Mr. Owen was thus engaged in introducing important reforms in education, he was also employed in an attempt to remove certain abuses from the factory system. Previous to 1802 apprentices were kept at work during the whole night; they rose at 6 P.M., and began their labour at 7; they breakfasted at midnight, and left the mill at 6 A.M.; in winter they were then sent to school; in summer they were permitted to play; at 10 o'clock they went to bed; the night-workers were never changed; they continued for four or five years constantly at the same drudgery. No terms the manufacturer could offer would induce free labourers to work in this manner by night. The want was supplied from poorhouses; the children were chiefly orphans, and bargains were sometimes made that the manufacturer should take one idiot in each lot of so many children.*

The Act of 1802 prohibited nightwork, and limited

* Report of Soc. for Bettering Cond. of Poor, vol. iv. App. pp. 4–14; Doubleday, 'Life of Peel,' vol. i. p. 177; 'Quarterly Review,' vol. viii. Dec. 1812; 'Life of Owen,' Philadelphia, p. 120.

the duration of apprentice labour to any twelve hours between 6 A.M. and 9 P.M; it provided for the instruction of the children; it prohibited more than two from sleeping in the same bed, and directed that the dormitories for boys should be separate from those for girls. Although this Act removed some of the most scandalous abuses, the condition of the factory hands still remained deplorable. "Perish," said Owen, "the cotton trade; perish even the political superiority of our country (if it depends on the cotton trade), rather than they shall be upheld by the sacrifice of everything valuable in life by those who are the means of supporting them." Mr. Owen drew up a Bill to prohibit the employment of any child under ten years of age in a factory, and until it was ascertained that the child could read, write, and cipher. The hours of labour, for all persons under eighteen years of age, were not to exceed 12½ hours; but of these 1½ must be allowed for meals, and half an hour for instruction; thus the total labour in the mill would not exceed 10 hours.

Mr. Owen set out for London early in 1815 to urge the adoption of this measure on the Government. He was generally well received by the members of both Houses of Parliament, but more especially by Lord Lascelles, to whose assistance he was largely indebted.* The conduct of the Bill through the Commons was intrusted to the elder Peel, who professed his readiness to undertake the charge; he was, however, powerfully influenced by his brother manufacturers, who fancied that their interests might be compromised if the measure were carried. The Bill was, therefore, de-

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 115.

layed during four sessions, and finally passed in a mutilated form. During the interval Owen exerted himself indefatigably; he sat day after day upon the committee during two sessions. By that time he had the mortification to witness his plan so changed as to be rendered inefficient; he accordingly ceased any longer to attend, and his place was supplied by Mr. Oastler. With his pen, however, he was not inactive; in 1818 he wrote a letter to Lord Liverpool, calling attention to the absence in the Factory Bill, then under discussion, of any restriction on adult labour. Such was the competition of population that workmen were often employed for fourteen and even for eighteen hours a day;* women shared with men the full measure of this drudgery; only children were partially exempted from it, and in their case the law was frequently evaded.

A few days after the publication of this letter, Mr. Owen addressed another to the master manufacturers. He knew that, as a class, it would be in vain to appeal to their humanity; he therefore sought to influence their judgment. High wages he contended could not be prejudicial to them, for the apparent loss falls upon the consumer, while the additional comfort enjoyed by the poor tends to create an increased demand for manufactured goods. The owners of slaves or of beasts of burden find it to their interest to keep their animals in good condition; so is it also with human labour; the man who is exhausted by want, or enfeebled by vice, can never be so profitable, even though his wages are lower, as one who is in full manly vigour. At New Lanark the wages were liberal, and the work not ex-

* 'Letter,' vol. ii. App. p. 188.

cessive, and yet the concern was highly profitable. Mr. Owen maintained that it was an entire mistake to permit the competition of labour to regulate the rate of wages. Wages, he held, should never be suffered to fall below a certain standard; a standard sufficiently liberal to provide all the necessaries, and some of the comforts and enjoyments of life. A mischievous competition, he fancied, might be averted if Government were to provide employment for the excess of population; he pointed to the large tracts of waste or badly-cultivated lands, and to the capital squandered in speculation, as means ready at hand to maintain a greatly increased population.

The Bill which passed in 1819, although sadly mutilated, contained one enactment of great importance. The practice of employing children in cotton-mills almost from infancy was prohibited; no child under nine years of age was henceforth to be allowed to work; the law protected young persons till they attained sixteen years of age; Mr. Owen had sought to increase this period to eighteen; this was afterwards effected by the Act of 1833.

Legislation has since then continued in the same direction, to lighten so far as practicable the labour of the poor, to protect children from avaricious parents and tyrannical masters; Government inspectors have been appointed to enforce the observance of the law, and to provide that each industry is conducted with regard to the health and morals of the workmen. The early labours of the Founder of Socialism have been of substantial benefit to mankind.

CHAPTER III.

ORIGIN OF SOCIALISM.

"In the midst of plethoric plenty the people perish."—*Carlyle.*

MR. OWEN'S claims to our gratitude as an educational reformer are now almost forgotten. His fame as a philanthropist is obliterated by the notoriety he subsequently acquired as the exponent of Socialism, a system of society not generally regarded with favour.

The movement dates from 1817. In that year Mr. Owen was requested to report on the causes of poverty, and to make such suggestions as appeared to him most likely to mitigate the evil. His Report was communicated in March, 1817, to the Committee on the Poor Laws.*

He attributes the alarming increase of pauperism to the effect of machinery. Formerly the wealth of the country arose from the labour of the peasant; now a

* This Committee, he informs us, was sitting "with the foregone determination to rob the poor of their just and until then legal rights, that is, the right to efficient relief when unable to work, or to find employment." ('Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 156.)

new agent, more powerful and less expensive, has to a great degree supplanted him. Mr. Owen found a remarkable example of this in his own business at New Lanark; from 2000 to 3000 people, aided by machinery, produced annually the same quantity of goods that fifty years before would have required the labour of the whole population of Scotland. In the United Kingdom the machinery in action equalled the labour of 100 millions of human beings. During the continuance of the late war the large drafts of men required for the armies abroad relieved the country of its surplus population; but the re-establishment of peace deprived it of this resource. The opening of foreign markets had stimulated the manufacturers to excessive production, and every country was glutted with British goods; a collapse in trade was the consequence, and numbers of labourers were thrown out of employment. There are three remedies that may be applied to meet the difficulty. The first is to destroy machinery, so that human labour may recover its value; the second is to permit the poor to starve down to the proper adjustment; the third is to find employment for those who require it. There were solid reasons against the adoption of either of the two first-named expedients; the third remained. It was fortunate that it is as simple as efficacious. It is well known that every man can produce more than he requires for his own consumption; each individual employed in agriculture can raise, with his own hands, sufficient food for five human beings; with the help of machinery this power is doubled.

It is absurd to maintain that we in England have

reached the stationary state, beyond which population cannot increase; waste and uncultivated lands abound; capital exists to profusion, and for want of profitable investment is daily squandered in reckless speculation. Here, then, are the sources of wealth. It is the business of society to provide that they shall be so combined as to diminish, if not to extinguish, poverty. The existing poor-law magnifies the evil it seeks to remove; the industrious are taxed to support the idle. In some cases the rate levied on property has already nearly amounted to confiscation; nor is there any symptom that the evil will tend to diminish, so long as an ignorant and profligate class are actively engaged in propagating a race of paupers to be as ignorant and profligate as themselves.

The problem is of no ordinary importance; the preservation of social order, and therefore the interests of civilization, depend upon its solution. Poverty can never be arrested until education has been universally diffused; until the character has been carefully trained to virtue; until the Government undertakes to provide the needy with productive labour. These were the three propositions to enforce which Mr. Owen devoted his life. I have already described his efforts in education, and explained his theory of the formation of character. As time went on, the importance he attached to this theory increased; it unfortunately brought him into collision with metaphysicians and theologians. A great part of his long life was spent in wounding the religious susceptibilities of his contemporaries; his writings became tainted by the acrimony of his opponents; public attention was diverted from an inter-

esting question in sociology to frivolous matters of controversy.

In his Report, Mr. Owen recommended that every union or county should provide a farm for the employment of their poor; when circumstances admitted of it, there should be a manufactory in connection with it. In this manner he contended that the poor would support themselves. £100,000 would be sufficient to purchase the land, to stock the farm, and to erect the buildings. The country would be thus relieved from the burden under which it is now oppressed. The land and permanent buildings would remain security for the capital, and the profits of the concern would amply pay the interest. Mr. Owen furnished the Committee with a drawing of a model establishment such as he contemplated. The land would consist of 1000 to 1500 acres, and the buildings afford accommodation for 1200 people. The most convenient form would be a square, divided into two parallelograms by the erection of public buildings in the centre. Lodging-rooms would occupy three sides of the square; each family would be provided with four rooms, and its numbers would be restricted to four persons. When it consisted of more than two children the others were to be sent to the dormitory, which would occupy the entire of the fourth side of the square. All the children from three years of age must sleep there, and must be sent to school. Their parents would be permitted to see them at meals, and at "all other proper times." The object of this arrangement would be to form their character from an early age; to withdraw them from evil influences; to train them in good habits. The system

adopted at New Lanark might perhaps supply the best model.

The children would not be permitted to work until they had acquired the rudiments of a good education, and sufficient bodily strength. An attempt would be made to employ the same men both in agriculture and manufacture, so that the exclusive pursuit of the latter might not impair their health. The women would be occupied in home duties, in cultivating garden vegetables, in washing, in attending by rotation in the kitchen, mess-room, and dormitories; they would also be allowed to work for four or five hours a-day in the manufactory. The building in the centre of the square would contain a kitchen, mess-room, school-rooms, library, and lecture-hall. The poor would enjoy every advantage that economy could suggest; the same roof would cover many dwellings; the same stove might warm every room; the food would be cooked at the same time, and on the same fire; the meals would be eaten from the same table, in the society of friends and fellow-workers. Sympathies now restricted to the family would be thus extended to a community; the union would be still farther cemented by an equal participation in the profits, an equal share in the toil; nor need any apprehension exist lest a community of interest should diminish the keenness of industry. A man is not likely to labour with less zeal for a society in which he himself has a direct interest, than for a master in whose prosperity he has no concern. None will seek a larger share in the profits than another, because the avidity of gain will diminish in proportion to the ease of acquisition. Competition is the cause of

many vices; association will be their corrective. That the heart is corroded by selfish ambition, that the energies are stimulated by unworthy vanity, is due entirely to the present organization of society.

Should any difficulty exist at the commencement it will speedily disappear, for the world is now in possession of the secret of the formation of character. The entire mechanism has been disclosed. According to the seed that is sown so the crop will be. Society has the power to extirpate the vices that menace its existence, and to cultivate the virtues that contribute to its prosperity. And here we are met by an objection; such a system as has been described would produce a uniformity of character that would compromise the progress of humanity; a singular objection, indeed, when we consider to what it in reality amounts. Society, as it is at present constituted, permits generation to succeed generation in the same dull uniformity of vice and misery. If we cannot stimulate individuality of character, we desire at least to produce a dull uniformity of virtue, in the place of its present equivalent in vice; but it must be remembered that education forms a part of the new system, and no measure is so calculated to call forth the latent energies of the mind, and to develope the idiosyncrasies of character.

Such was the scheme Mr. Owen propounded for the relief of the poor; it was received with enthusiasm. The 'Times' directed the attention of its readers to Mr. Owen, and to "his enlightened zeal in the cause of humanity." The 'Morning Post' spoke of the "distinguished philanthropist of New Lanark, whose ap-

peal cannot possibly fail of success;" and, indeed, it adds, "Future ages will have cause to revere his memory as the virtuous author of universal public good, and as one of the most distinguished and worthy benefactors of the human race."

It was not long before his plan assumed more startling proportions. In a letter which he published soon after, he declared the possibility of reconstituting the whole of society upon a similar basis. It must be clearly borne in mind that the proposed change was to be wrought by voluntary association; no force was to be used; the Government were asked to assist, but not to coerce. The advantages of association are so apparent that there is no need to explain them; the difficulties it presents proceed exclusively from habits of thought, engendered by the present state of society, and which may be easily reversed. Pending the revolution in mind and practice a provisional system may be adopted, which will form a compromise between the old world and the new. Existing society, based as it is upon antiquated prejudices, is divided into social casts, and these are again subdivided according to political and religious opinions; it is clear the noble could never condescend to associate with the plebeian, neither would the Whig hold out the hand of fellowship to the Tory, or the true believer to the heretic. Here, then, were practical difficulties that needed solution.

Speaking broadly, rank is now pretty accurately measured by wealth; the first step is, therefore, to divide society into classes according to this standard. The lowest are, of course, the paupers, those who possess no-

thing, who are unable to procure employment; we have already seen how they may be provided for. Then come the "working-class," who would be employed by the fourth class. The next would consist of labourers, artisans, and tradesmen, with property from £100 to £2000; but, in order to reconcile the prejudices which exist even among these humble people, it would be necessary to subdivide them into twelve divisions, graduated according to their capital. "Their accommodations of all kinds will be in proportion to the capital they can at first advance, or may hereafter acquire." Finally, on the apex of the new system will be placed those who are unwilling or unable to work, but who possess from £1000 to £20,000; their requirements will afford employment for the second class, but the relations between them will not be left without supervision. A committee, chosen from the working-class, will be charged with the superintendence of all the arrangements between employer and employed. The workman would be supported in comfort during seven years, and then the aristocratic community for which he laboured would present him with £100, to enable him to join the lowest division of the third class; if he preferred it, he might remain in his old position for five years longer, and then he would become entitled to receive £200. So long as a few persons of great wealth chose to continue in their present isolation, they must be supplied with labour from this second class, and the remuneration they offer would require to be at least as great as that which has been mentioned.

But the whole of the difficulty will not yet be re-

moved until each of these classes has been again subdivided into 140 divisions, corresponding to the various combinations of religious and political opinions that are to be found in old society. In this manner it is anticipated that every one will find an association to suit him, where his peculiar views will escape opposition, where the susceptibilities of rank will not be outraged.

Mr. Owen communicated his new system of society to the public in a series of letters addressed to the newspapers, and by means of two meetings held at the London Tavern. In the first meeting he had to announce the liberal offer of 1500 acres on the part of a Scotch gentleman, for the purpose of testing the new views. It was proposed to form a committee to receive subscriptions; it was announced that books of enrolment were kept at the principal booksellers,* where the names would be entered of all who were willing to join the new communities; it was requested that each person would specify his opinions, in order that his place might be properly assigned. There appeared at one time a probability that at least one experimental community might be established. Mr. Owen was greatly elated; he looked forward to the future with enthusiasm; he fancied that he already beheld poverty removed from the country, and the poor gathered into prosperous communities, where they were relieved of distress by the fruits of their own labour, and those who were incapacitated for work supported out of the common fund. More than this; he anticipated a re-

* These were Lindsell, Wimpole Street; Longman and Co., Paternoster Row; Cadell and Davies, Strand; Hatchard, Piccadilly; Arches, Cornhill.

volution in society, when its present structure would be wholly reversed, when competition would be replaced by association, the isolation of families by communistic life. He declared that he had no higher ambition than to occupy a room in a parallelogram, where his private expenses would be reduced to £20 a year.

He was now a most popular man; his reputation for philanthropy commanded universal sympathy; the views he had recently propounded were regarded as the excited dreams of an amiable enthusiast; his plans tickled the imagination, where they did not command the judgment. The press was highly eulogistic, and for good reason,—Mr. Owen purchased 40,000 copies of the principal papers, containing his letters or speeches, and distributed them at his own expense throughout the country.

But this magnificent popularity Mr. Owen determined to sacrifice. We have seen that he had ceased from an early age to believe in Christianity; he now advanced a step further; he had arrived at the unusual opinion that religion is a positive injury to mankind; he resolved to lose no time in destroying it. The means he adopted were singular: he collected a mob in the London Tavern, such as may be seen every day at public meetings; he explained the false principle of moral responsibility upon which every religion is based; he fancied the whole system must explode the moment he had shown, that if a man is born in the Andaman Islands he must as necessarily eat men, as in the event of being born in Edinburgh he would naturally damn them. He imagined superstition could only be extinguished in blood; he offered himself as

the victim; he really thought his own life in danger; he fully expected to have been torn in pieces by the infuriated zealots whose gods he had overthrown. Yet he was suffered to go in safety; the profane laughed; good men were pained; fools clamoured. Such was the proceeding to which Mr. Owen ever afterwards reverted with peculiar satisfaction. "It was," he said, "ever to be remembered in the annals of history," for then "bigotry, superstition, and all false religion, received their deathblow."* At that time prosecutions were not uncommon for less offences; Mr. Owen, however, escaped. The day after he met Mr. Brougham. "How the devil," inquired the future Lord Chancellor, with his accustomed energy of expression, "could you say what you did yesterday at your public meeting? If any of us had said half as much we should have been burned alive, and here you are quietly walking as if nothing had occurred." But these proceedings caused considerable commotion among the personal friends of Owen. "Robert Owen is in town," writes Allen, "and I am much distressed about him; he has blazoned abroad his infidel principles in all the public newspapers, and he wishes to identify me with his plans, which I have resisted in the most positive manner." Formerly Owen met with a hospitable reception at Plough Court; but now we are informed that Allen's "apostolic mother, kindling with indignation when he appeared at her son's house, refused to remain in the same room with the denier of her Lord, and fled from his presence with grief and shame."

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. pp. 160, 162. † Life by Dunne, p. 92.

While in the enjoyment of the notoriety caused by the meetings at the London Tavern, Owen determined to make a Continental tour; he had formed the acquaintance of M. Pictet, who was well known in Europe as a writer on education; M. Cuvier was then in England, making inquiries into our political institutions, and the French Government had sent a frigate to reconvey the distinguished philosopher to France. Mr. Owen and M. Pictet accompanied Cuvier to Paris, and they were soon introduced to the brilliant society of that capital. The novelty of Mr. Owen's opinions had a charm for his French friends, amongst whom a certain amount of theological laxity is not, as with us, a crime. It was unfortunate that Owen was ignorant of the French language, for his conversation had to be conducted through the medium of an interpreter. Having stayed six weeks in Paris, he proceeded to Switzerland, and personally inspected the famous establishments at Hofwyl, Yverdun, and Waldbach. He took leave of his friend M. Pictet in Switzerland, but was accompanied through Germany by his partner, Mr. Walker, of Arno's Grove. At Frankfort they found the Germanic Diet assembled; Owen at once took measures to introduce himself to the principal persons who were there, and amongst others he became acquainted with the Count Capo-d'Istria. Owen was not backward in bringing forward his New Views; with this object he waylaid the Emperor of Russia in an hotel, and presented a packet of papers to him. The Emperor's clothes were of such an exquisite fit that he could not find room for the packet in any of his pockets. He, therefore, desired Owen to come to

him in the evening, and to bring his papers along with him; but the manner and imperious order of the autocrat offended the fatalist philosopher, and he refused to comply. It may be owing to this trifling circumstance that Socialist villages have not long since adorned the plains between Petersburg and Moscow.

Undeterred by this rebuff, Owen resolved to be present at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. He accordingly drew up a memorial to the Allied Sovereigns, which he confided to Lord Castlereagh to deliver at the most propitious moment. This was accordingly done, and Owen was subsequently informed, doubtless upon unimpeachable authority, that his memorial was considered by far the most important document submitted to the Congress.* The august potentates, who were assembled together in solemn council, could not but be dimly conscious that the era of their power was drawing to a close. Owen, indeed, claimed only to be a social reformer, and energetically repudiated any pretension to Liberal politics; he argued that, in the ignorant condition of the working-classes, to give them power would be to reduce society to anarchy; but he knew that intelligence was diffusing rapidly amongst a class where it was associated only with the acutest misery and the keenest suffering; unless measures were immediately taken to improve the wretched condition of the poor, their growing intelligence would soon prove destructive to order. Machinery and education were at once the cause and the cure of existing discontent; it was machinery that had deprived the labourer of his only capital, the only source of his life,

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 186.

his labour; but it was machinery that had so amazingly increased the power of production, that, under a new organization of society, plenty might be secured without difficulty to all. It was education that had called forth the intelligence of the poor, that had supplied him with a reason for his discontent, and a power to vindicate his right; but it was education also that, properly directed, formed the cohesive power of society; it was through its influence that conflicting interests might be harmonized, turbulent passions subdued, and every class in society united. But, however vital these considerations must have appeared to the advanced thinkers of that period, I am not aware that any of the acts of the Congress indicate the influence of Owen.

When Mr. Owen returned to London he found that his denunciation of religion had aroused public opinion against him. The respectable publishers now refused to accept his productions,* and even the newspapers he had subsidized so largely could no longer magnify his merits. He was not, however, without some exalted patronage; the Dukes of Kent and Sussex occasionally visited him in London, to see the model he had made of a happy village. Owen also entertained his royal visitors with a mechanical representation of existing society, showing the vast numerical majority and consequent importance of the people, and the comparative insignificance of an aristocracy, but more especially of royalty. Owen's connection with the Duke of Kent was not, however, limited to these pleasing diversions; whether from policy or conviction, that prince had

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 201.

adopted the popular cause, and it was impossible for him to ignore the schemes of the philanthropic socialist. In order to obtain accurate information of the results actually achieved at New Lanark, he dispatched his physician, Dr. Macnab, to make personal investigation. Dr. Macnab was at once thrown into an ecstasy of admiration; his unpractised pen was sorely taxed to depict the feelings with which he was inspired; yet he did not fail to communicate to his royal master a portion of his own enthusiasm. The Duke at once professed himself a disciple. "I have," he writes to Owen, "a most sincere wish that a fair trial should be given to your system, of which I have never hesitated to acknowledge myself an admirer." Two years had nearly elapsed since the thunderbolt had burst in the London Tavern; the old society was still going on in its old way, unconscious that its foundations had been overturned; subscriptions and volunteers came in slowly, and nothing had as yet been done. But at length it seemed as though the triumph of the New Views was not far distant; the country was in great distress, and convulsed by political agitation; the term of endurance had approached; unless the poor were relieved a revolution was inevitable. It was to the consideration of this vital question that a meeting was called on the 26th of June, 1819, in order to appoint a committee to inquire into Mr. Owen's views on the subject. The Duke of Kent consented to be the chairman, and many well-known names occur on the committee; among others we find those of Ricardo, Major Torrens, Joseph Fry, of the Poultry, and Sir Robert Peel. On the 23rd of August the result of

their investigations was published; they recommended a trial of Owen's scheme; they argued that the experiment if it failed could do no harm, but if it succeeded might produce incalculable good; they sought to combat the objections that had been urged against it under the supposition that the scheme necessarily involved a community of goods. This theory they acknowledged Mr. Owen had put forth, but it was not essential to the success of the plan, nor was it their intention to adopt it; the establishment they had in contemplation would be formed by private subscription, and would remain private property; it would afford employment for the poor partly in manufactures and partly in agriculture; it would be so conducted as to return a reasonable profit to the shareholders; it was expected that it would prove not merely a charity, but also an investment. Subscriptions were therefore invited, and some of the most respectable bankers in London consented to receive them; £100,000 was required to establish each pauper colony, but no more than £8000 could be collected. Accordingly, on the 1st of December, 1819, another meeting was held, at which the Duke of Kent presided; the movement was declared to have been a failure, as the public had not come forward to support it; the committee regretted that their exertions had not conduced to a better result, and having carried a vote of thanks to the Duke they dissolved. One hope yet remained,—a petition was laid on the table of each House of Parliament praying for an inquiry into Mr. Owen's plan. The petition was numerously signed by the nobility and gentry of the county of Lanark, and by other persons of high respectability.* The Duke of

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 216.

Kent had expressed himself particularly anxious that this proceeding might be successful. "If," he wrote, "any measures are to be taken in Parliament which should render it indispensably necessary that I should vouch for facts, from having had ocular demonstration of them, I shall not hesitate in posting down to Scotland for the purpose." On the 16th of December Sir William de Crespigny moved for a Committee of Inquiry; he said it was necessary that the higher classes should condescend to inquire into the miseries of the poor, with a view to the effectual alleviation of their distress, otherwise bloodshed and anarchy would ensue; he had seen the effect produced by education at New Lanark, and would never forget to his dying day the impression it had made upon him. Mr. Brougham was of opinion that no scheme, however apparently wild and impracticable, for the relief of the existing distress should be passed over without notice; he was at issue with Owen on the fundamental doctrine of population,—the excess being in his opinion a great calamity; the portion of Mr. Owen's plan to which he gave his adhesion was the system of education, which Mr. Brougham preferred to Fellenberg's; he had the highest respect and esteem for Mr. Owen, whom he believed to be one of the most humane, simple-minded, amiable men on earth; Owen was indeed a rare character, for though a projector he was one of the most calm and candid men he had ever conversed with; "you might discuss his theories in any terms you pleased, you might dispose of his arguments just as you thought proper, and he listened with the utmost mildness; his mind perfectly free from gall, he had none

of the feverish and irritable feelings so common to projectors." The Chancellor of the Exchequer read from Owen's speech of August, 1817, denouncing religions, and stated that Owen had declared his scheme founded on these principles; he therefore did not hesitate to reject it. "At the same time he wished to do every justice to the character of Mr. Owen, whose humane and benevolent intentions could not be too highly praised." Some years ago he had visited Lanark, and though that establishment had not then attained its present state of perfection, it was even then productive of great benefit, and reflected the highest credit on Mr. Owen; he had thought the general system superior to any he had ever seen, and from what he had since heard he believed it to have been much improved. Mr. Ricardo regarded Owen's schemes as visionary; he remarked that employing people on public works would not increase the capital at the disposal of the labourers, and that population is one of the main evils of society. Mr. Wilberforce opposed the motion on the ground of the irreligious views upon which the plan was based. Sir William de Crespigny in reply observed that it was a fine sight to see the people of New Lanark proceeding each Sunday to their different places of worship. On a division the motion was rejected by 141 to 16.

In the following year Mr. Owen drew up a Report to the County of Lanark, which had the effect of giving a new impulse to the movement; it attracted some attention abroad, and procured for the author a vote of thanks from the French Academy.

The Essay naturally divides itself into two parts; the theoretical and the practical: the former is rather

obscure. Poverty, he remarks, is universal, yet wealth abounds; indeed, wealth is in a measure the cause of poverty, for every market is glutted with goods. The power of production exceeds the capacity of consumption; manufacturers are obliged to cease from their labours, and to dismiss their men, who are left to starve: it is therefore desirable to increase the markets, whereby the excess of production may be carried off, and the manufactories restored to activity. The way to effect this is to enable every man to be himself a market; each individual has an abundant desire to be possessed of the various articles that now uselessly crowd the markets; the only misfortune is that he cannot get them, and the reason of this is that society has introduced an artificial system of exchange. Unless possessed of that very useless commodity gold, we are left to starve, gazing on plenty; and thus it comes to pass that "the working classes are made the slaves of an artificial system of wages, more cruel in its effects than any slavery ever practised by society, either barbarous or civilized."*

The remedy for this disastrous condition lies upon the surface; every man is possessed of labour-power, which is the source of all wealth, and should be its only standard; abolish, therefore, gold as a standard of value, and substitute labour in its stead; as every one can labour, every one would have in his person a command of wealth, whether he had a purse of gold in his pocket or not. This measure would, Mr. Owen remarks, "let prosperity loose on the country,"† for with one blow poverty would cease for ever. It might

* 'Autobiography,' vol. ii. p. 268. † *Ibid.* p. 266.

appear a matter of some difficulty to estimate the value of each individual's labour, in the commodities for which he desired to exchange it; but in reality this would not be so. Has not the average power of a horse been estimated, and why not also that of a man? It might also appear possible to conceive occasions when human labour was absolutely worthless, but such an objection is still less reasonable than the preceding. Every man has a capacity to produce many times more than he requires for himself; his labour must, therefore, always be of value. Here we speak only of the able-bodied, because the healthy members of a community will be at all times able to support the burthen of the infirm. These two objections to the new standard, which appear to have been the only ones that occurred to Mr. Owen, having been thus satisfactorily disposed of, I must commend the suggestion to the anxious consideration of legislators. The want of money is a constant source of annoyance, and therefore the removal of its necessity will be a most acceptable reform. As Mr. Owen truly remarks, "The improvements of society have outgrown the late system of cash payments."

Next to this important change, Mr. Owen recommends the adoption of spade husbandry. This system of agriculture is far more profitable than that usually adopted, and possesses the advantage of employing a larger amount of human labour. But it need hardly be said that the greatest benefit is to be derived from the resolution of society into quadrangular villages, "on the principle of united labour, expenditure, and property,*

* 'Autobiography,' vol. ii. p. 282.

and equal privileges." The details of this system have been already elaborately described; we are here, however, supplied with more particulars respecting the distribution of property. It appears that in the new state of society abundance will fall to the lot of every one; the result of this fortunate circumstance will be that covetousness will be struck off the category of human vices; all having enough, none will care to have more; and "as the easy, regular, healthy, rational employments of the individuals forming these societies will create a very large surplus of their own products beyond what they will have any desire to consume, each may be freely permitted to receive from the general store of the community whatever they may require."* "The peculiar produce to be raised in each establishment, beyond the general supply of the necessaries and comforts of life, which, if possible, will be abundantly created in each, will be adapted to afford the greatest variety of intrinsically valuable objects to exchange with each other; and the particular surplus products, which will serve to give energy and pleasure to the industry of the members of each association, will be regulated by the nature of the soil, and climate, and other local capabilities of the situation of each establishment. In all these labour will be the standard of value, and as there will always be a progressive advance in the amount of labour, mental, manual, and scientific, if we suppose population to increase under these arrangements, there will be in the same proportion a perpetually extending market or demand for all the industry of society, whatever may be its extent."†

* 'Autobiography,' vol. ii. p. 303. † *Ibid.* p. 303.

This report was referred to a committee of country gentlemen. They were happily relieved from the necessity of pronouncing a decision on the abstract principles it contained by the determination of Mr. Owen to publish it, and thus to submit it to the ordeal of public discussion. The committee could, however, testify to the admirable success of New Lanark, and they were willing to recommend the trial upon a small scale of spade husbandry.

Mr. Hamilton, of Dalzell, came forward at this juncture with a most liberal offer; he volunteered to let the lands of Motherwell, upon a long lease, at a grain rent, in order to afford an opportunity of testing Mr. Owen's principles; such was his confidence in the New Views that he intended the establishment for a Bridewell; the county should undertake the erection of the building, which would cost £40,000. Mr. Hamilton was willing to guarantee that this sum should be repaid in twenty years, and that interest at five per cent. per annum should be paid during the interval; besides this, he offered, with Mr. Owen's assistance, to act as superintendent. To this proposition Mr. Owen objected that his system would require special modifications in order to be applied to delinquents, and he protested that it should have a fairer trial at the commencement.* Moreover, it does not appear that the county was willing to accede to the proposal, and the scheme was in consequence abandoned.

Mr. Hamilton, however, did not withdraw his offer of land; it was, therefore, proposed to raise the money necessary for an experiment in shares of £25 each.

* 'Autobiography,' vol. ii. p. 313.

The establishment would be intended for honest workmen, not for criminals; every encouragement would be given them to purchase the shares themselves, according as their capital increased, till at length they became the proprietors of the whole concern.

The proposal was for the time unsuccessful; at length it was taken up, in 1822, by the British and Foreign Philanthropic Society for the Permanent Relief of the Working Classes. This Society was under distinguished patronage; the Vice-Presidents included the representatives of the principal countries of Europe, besides a long list of peers; the Acting Committee was composed of gentlemen of rank and influence. The object of the Society was to "carry into effect measures for the permanent relief of the labouring classes, by forming communities for mutual interest and co-operation, in which, by means of education, example, and employment, they will be gradually withdrawn from the evils induced by ignorance, bad habits, poverty, and want of employment."* These communities were to be mainly agricultural, and self-supporting; they would be governed by a committee chosen from all the members between a certain age, as for example, between forty and fifty. This committee would undertake to provide each member with the work best suited to his taste and ability. All the members will be fully supplied with the necessaries and comforts of life, and the surplus of profit would be applied to pay the interest due to the Society upon the capital, and also gradually to redeem the capital itself, "and when this debt is cancelled, the future

* Journal, i. 157.

surplus shall be invested to form a fund for the establishment of a second community, when the increased population of the first shall require it."

The first report of the Society was read by Lord Blessington in June, 1822; he acknowledged that Mr. Owen was the discoverer of the new system of relief for the poor, yet the Philanthropic Society did not think it necessary to embrace the whole of his system; they repudiated his metaphysics, which they considered irrelevant.* They announced that nearly sufficient money had been collected to commence the community at Motherwell; they intended that it should be a model for the rest, and that it should be used for a Normal School, where the teachers might be trained who were to go forth to found, in every part of the country, other communities for the relief of distress and the regeneration of mankind.†

Mr. Owen had thus the satisfaction to see that the seed he had sown had taken root and was bearing fruit; whether for good or for evil, he had now many converts; nor can they be classed as deluded enthusiasts; many of them were of high rank and refined education. In 1821 his views were again brought before Parliament; and he went to Ireland in the following year, to widen the area of his conquests.

It was in June, 1821, that Mr. Maxwell rose from his seat in Parliament to present a petition, which bore numerous and influential names, chiefly Scotch,

* Journal, vol. ii. 77, 103.

† *Ibid.* p. 84. Mr. Owen subscribed £10,000 to the funds of the Society; Mr. Hamilton, of Dalzell, Mr. Morrison, and Mr. Jones £5000 each; there were several subscriptions of £1000.

humbly praying that a Committee of the House might be appointed to visit and report on New Lanark; he spoke, he said, in behalf of "unrepresented labour," which was reduced to the greatest distress from Mr. Pitt's taxation and war, from the Corn Laws, and the enclosure of the commons; he stated Mr. Owen's plan for the relief of the poor to consist in the introduction of spade husbandry, the union of agricultural and industrial labour, an improved system of education, and the advantages to be derived by the saving proceeding from communistic life. Lord Londonderry opposed the motion; Mr. Owen's scheme might be found "applicable enough to poorhouses," but otherwise highly repulsive to the feelings of a free nation. Mr. Hume thought it "would make us a race of beings little removed from brutes, only ranging the four corners of a parallelogram instead of the mazes of a forest." Dr. Lushington could not imagine how distress was to be removed by feeding the people at certain hours like horses, or by exercising them at stated times; he approved of morality, but he could not sanction the abandonment of religion. Mr. Buxton concurred with the noble marquis, and yet he intended to vote for the motion; he could see no remedy for distress in quadrangular paradises, but Mr. Owen's establishment presented a marked contrast to the workhouses; the one promoted virtue and happiness, the other vice and misery; he, therefore, hoped that good might proceed from inquiry. Mr. Canning had formed the highest opinion of the zeal, talents, and benevolent disposition of Mr. Owen; he had been strongly urged by him to attend, but felt he must

oppose the motion on the ground of the scheme being inimical to individuality; though successful on a small scale, it was a most fallacious inference to suppose that it would be so on a large scale; the House should pause before it set the example of a community existing in Christendom where there would be no religion. Lord A. Hamilton protested that Mr. Owen's plan included the strict observance of religious duties, and Mr. Brougham went so far as to "assure the House, that if any fault was to be found with the system pursued at Lanark, it was on the score of too much religion."*

The motion was lost.

In 1822, Owen crossed to Ireland, to investigate the causes of the misery that afflicted that unfortunate island. He passed several months in travelling through the country; he lodged in the palaces of the great; he encountered in society persons of every persuasion in politics and religion; he sought out Roman Catholic and Protestant prelates, and contrived to gain information from all sides; he visited the cabins of the poor, and himself witnessed the poverty and wretchedness of their condition; he narrowly questioned agriculturists, and convinced himself of the richness of the soil that supported beggars. He went to Maynooth and challenged the doctors of theology; a great meeting was held in the presence of Dr. Croly, the President of the College, at which Owen explained the New Views; at the termination of the proceedings, instead of receiving the anathema of the Church, he was suffered to go in peace, and to disseminate his

* Parliamentary Debates.

opinions without opposition. At length he arrived in Dublin, and convened a public meeting at the Rotundo, at which he proposed to show, as the result of his inquiries, how poverty might be banished for ever from the country, and the population be increased to fifty millions. On the day appointed the Lord Mayor took the chair; he was supported on the platform by men of great influence; amongst others by the Duke of Leinster, Archbishop Murray, Lords Meath and Cloncurry. It was, indeed, an occasion of vast importance, as many must have felt when Owen proceeded to say, "I will now disclose to you a secret which till now has been hidden from mankind: it is that the fundamental notion on which the whole fabric of society has been raised is an error—a lamentable error;—one which pervades all the proceedings of men."* What need is there to remind the reader that this fundamental error relates to the formation of character; that each man is what circumstance has made him; that as he has had no concern in the construction, he can have no blame in the result? The moment this great discovery becomes known, who can doubt that the Ribbonman will not be instantly reconciled to the Orange badge, and the Protestant minister forthwith extend the hand of fellowship to the Catholic priest? All diversity of opinion will be forgotten, ancient animosity will cease to rankle; where strife and hatred abounded, nought will remain but peace and love. Having thus in a few words reconciled for ever the factious politician to his adversary, and the true believer to the heretic, he proceeded to investigate the question of

* Journal, vol. ii. 127.

landlord and tenant. "It is a common mistake," he said, "arising from the confusion of ideas inseparable from the present erroneous system of society, to believe that the rich provide for the poor and working classes; while, in fact, the poor and working classes create all the wealth which the rich possess. The working classes can provide abundance for themselves, and be independent of any other class—but the rich, without the working classes, would be the most helpless of human beings. The rich, so far from aiding the working classes, actually prevent them from creating a supply of wealth that would be sufficient to preclude all from becoming poor: they prevent the working classes from producing far more wealth for the rich than the rich now possess."* And this they do in two ways: first, by withholding education from them, so that their intellectual and industrial powers remain undeveloped; and, secondly, because they do not supply them with work. Now, it is a fact that cannot be gainsayed, that every man who is properly trained can raise from the ground far more than he requires for his own support; and the reason why the whole population is not thus productively employed is because the rich, who are in possession of the natural agents, will not turn them to use unless they can afterwards bring the goods they have produced to market, and there sell them for a profit. Thus "at present the production of wealth is limited by the want of markets; and markets are limited by the want of a convenient circulating medium to represent the products of labour as soon as they are created, and to effect their ready exchange; or in other words,

* Journal, vol. ii. p. 140.

the industry of society is restrained by the existing artificial monied system."* And this must be clear to the apprehension of all; every one has got a demand in his own person for food, clothing, and the necessaries of life; every one is in short a living market. The difficulty is he has not got the money to get what he wants, and without which the producer obstinately refuses to part with his goods; abolish this system of cash payment and all difficulty disappears. Although few have money, all have labour-power; and it is labour, and not money that produces wealth; constitute therefore labour the standard of exchange, and misery will cease for ever. Productions will enormously increase, because markets have magnified indefinitely; every unit of the population has, in fact, become a market, where there is not only a great demand, but an efficient demand; for is not man, balanced upon two legs, with two arms, and a head on the top, the living embodiment of labour, which has now become the standard of exchange? At the conclusion of the address a theological storm burst upon Mr. Owen; his object was "to render the Christian religion nugatory;" it was "to lure men to their doom;" to reduce them to savages, without money or traffic; the people were exhorted to turn with indignation from this pretended benefactor; they were implored "not to sacrifice their Bible to Mr. Owen's pamphlet, nor their Redeemer to Mr. Owen's metaphysics."†

Two other meetings were subsequently held, though not under such distinguished patronage; still they were crowded to excess, and the greatest interest was

* Journal, vol. ii. p. 140. † *Ibid.* p. 165.

evinced. Mr. Owen explained the details of his system: the agricultural colony, the parallelograms, the system of education; he showed his various models: the farm, the buildings, the conical representation of the ranks of society, and an ingenious device by which the virtues and faculties of man were exhibited by a series of slides. The result was in some degree satisfactory; a society was formed for the purpose of trying an experiment according to the New Views, and disseminating a knowledge of the great discovery; it was called "The Hibernian Philanthropic Society." Owen and General Brown each subscribed £1000, Lord Cloncurry £500, and some other gentlemen £100.* In the first meeting, held at Morrison's Hotel, "several letters were read, offering tracts of land in various parts of the country for the purposes of the society." These efforts must have had but little success, for I have not since heard of the extinction of poverty in Ireland, or of the conversion of the hostile factions to the Rational System.

* Journal, vol. iii. p. 181.

CHAPTER IV.

EXPERIMENTS IN SOCIALISM.

"If we cannot reconcile all opinions,
Let us endeavour to unite all hearts."
Motto of 'New Harmony Gazette.'

AMONG the visitors to New Lanark in 1820 was Abram Combe. He was then thirty-five years of age, and nothing had as yet intimated that the last few years of his life were to be spent in active philanthropy; he was known as a wit, a satirist, and a cynic; his lampoons had excited the fear, and his parodies the laughter of the circle in which he lived. He followed the trade of a tanner in Edinburgh; he kept a sharp eye on the main chance, drove hard bargains, and had the reputation of being well to do. After his visit to New Lanark his character underwent an entire change; he became a convert to the New Views; he renounced spirituous liquor and animal food; he wrote essays of a political, metaphysical kind, which are not now generally read, and are indeed scarcely readable. He embraced the opinion that happiness is the object of life, and perceived that it can only be attained by living for the

good of others. He at once set about forming a co-operative society, in which he was assisted by Donald MacDonald, who afterwards became an active citizen of New Harmony; in a short time they were joined by 500 or 600 families; they met in the evening for instruction and amusement, which they found in conversation and dancing. "The Practical Society," as it was called, flourished for a little while, and then it died. But Combe was not discouraged by this failure; he determined to form a community on a small scale in his tan-works; he erected dormitories and a public kitchen; he induced the workmen to live in common, and he shared the profits with them; but after a short time discord arose, and the community was dissolved. An opportunity at length offered for an experiment on a larger scale. Combe and Mr. Hamilton of Dalzell feuded the lands of Orbiston for £20,000; they consist of 291 acres, and are situated on the Edinburgh road, nine miles to the east of Glasgow. The funds were raised in 200 shares of £250 each; £100 had to be paid up by quarterly instalments of £10. Early in March, 1825, building operations began upon a large scale; no less than 100 workmen were employed; in the course of a year a huge pile was erected, at the expense of £10,000, capable of accommodating 100 families. The length was 330 feet, and it rose to four stories; it was divided into rooms 16 feet by 12; there were two large dining-rooms, kitchens, and other rooms for public purposes; at the back one wing for children was already completed, and another was in contemplation. No difficulty was found in procuring occupants; they assembled from all parts of England and Scotland,—a most pro-

miscuous and ill-assorted crowd. Hired labour was dispensed with, and the completion of the undertaking was confided to the community.* Such was the establishment Mr. Combe had to direct; his appearance and character inspired confidence, particularly among those who had come prepared to endure the hardship inseparable from every new undertaking, and who were determined to improve their condition by hard labour. Each member had a debtor and credit account at the store; he signed a ticket for every article he required, and the amount was charged to him; on the other side he was credited with the estimated value of his labour; the account showing the balance for or against him was furnished every week. Thus there was not a community of goods, for Mr. Combe maintained that for a time at least it was advisable that the reward should be apportioned according to the value of the labour, and to the industry of the labourer. The next generation indeed will have no necessity for this precaution; education will in the meantime entirely revolutionize character; labour will be ennobled, fair dealing between man and man will become an undeviating practice in New Society. Towards the end of the year 1826 there were no less than 300 members; among these the majority were disappointed to find that the system of Communism had not been fully adopted.† Their jealousy was excited when they saw some of their companions much better off than themselves; accordingly a meeting was held, in which a resolution was passed, "That all the members of the

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 162; London, 1826.

† *Ibid.* p. 322.

society unite together to produce a common stock, out of which all our common expenditure hereafter to be agreed on will be paid, and that an equal share of the surplus of our labour be placed to the account of each member of the community, according to the time occupied by each." The last sentence would appear to imply that a share in the profits would be apportioned to labour but not to skill. The resolution was strenuously resisted by the minority, and found little favour with the proprietors; accordingly at another meeting the tenants proposed to take upon themselves the whole estate, subject to all its liabilities; they offered to pay five per cent. interest upon the capital, and to apply the profits to the final redemption of the principal, so that in the end they would themselves be the proprietors. This proposition was acceded to on certain conditions; the whole of the community must be re-elected by ballot, and the members must submit their new rules to the approbation of the proprietors. It is almost inconceivable that men like Mr. Combe and Mr. Hamilton of Dalzell should have required subscription to an article of faith as a condition of membership; yet such was the case. Every one had also to declare his belief "that man is a creature of circumstances, and that character is *formed for* and *not by* the individuals." Nothing came of the movement, from which we may infer that the conditions imposed by the proprietors were not agreeable to the promoters of the resolution; notwithstanding this difference of opinion, the undertaking met with tolerable success.

Early in 1827 the whole of the buildings were far advanced towards completion. The different occupa-

tions were carried on with industry; all children under twelve were at school, those above that age were employed in such healthy occupations as were suitable to them; the people were comfortably clothed at little cost—their whole dress was made in the establishment; their food was plain, but simple and wholesome. Besides this, the moral character of the population had undergone a very decided improvement; drunkenness and immorality were placed under the ban of opinion—the name of the offender was entered in a register kept for the purpose, and in a short time it was found that these vices disappeared. An attack was even made upon tobacco, and the use of that insidious weed was confined to the private room of the smoker.* The ladies were placed upon a level with the men, and at first used their new privileges to menace the tranquillity of their former masters, but at length even they became more contented, and subsided to the usual average of female temper. A theatre had been erected, and it already afforded great amusement. At an early stage of the proceedings, a newspaper, called the 'Orbiston Register,' had been started, and, animated by the prospect of success, the writers began to indulge in the most magnificent dreams: the curse of Eden was at length erased from the brow of man; he was emancipated from the slavery of never-ceasing toil; the genius of discovery had placed a boundless power of mechanism within his grasp; the bounty of nature had richly endowed him with her blessings, and a new organization of society had combined them in his favour. It was said that a few years of probationary labour—

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 198.

enough to stimulate the energies of youth, and to afford a legitimate sphere for activity — would be sufficient to provide to all an abundance that would secure leisure and repose for the declining years of life. Communities would be everywhere established—in the Highlands of Scotland and in the centres of industry; they would finally extend throughout Europe, and to America; wherever the traveller wandered he would be met with a welcome, and surrounded by friends; and thus, when the term of his labour had expired, will the citizen of the New Society pass the afternoon and evening of his days, extending the field of his knowledge, and enlarging the range of his sympathies. But, alas! the projector of this magnificent scheme already stood at the brink of death—and with him passed away the new heaven and the new earth. Combe had fallen a victim to his zeal. He exerted himself beyond his strength at digging, to which he had never been accustomed. Although his illness might not have been dangerous, his ignorance of its nature led him to commit every kind of imprudence, till at length he was beyond recovery. He endured much suffering with stoic courage, and died in August, 1827, the earliest confessor and martyr of the New Views. The satisfaction with which he regarded his life was complete, and his expectation of the triumph of his great undertaking was happily unclouded. Nevertheless, a few months after his death the whole fabric he had created fell to pieces. Deprived of his active superintendence and guidance, anarchy rapidly followed on disorder, and the members dispersed; the estate was sold, and a neighbouring proprietor purchased it;

the huge and hideous pile of buildings was razed to the ground, and nothing now remains to mark the work of Abram Combe.

A few months before the first stone was laid at Orbiston, Robert Owen sailed for America. He went to seek new bottles for the new wine. The apostle of a new religion, the discoverer of a new philosophy, the inventor of a new system of society, he was received as became his dignity; in the Hall of Representatives at Washington, before the President of the great Republic and the chief men of the state, he explained his mission.* We have no need to enter into particulars; we have already heard it all at the London Tavern, and at the Rotundo in Dublin; the words were different, but the substance the same. He went not, indeed, as a mere orator to declare the new gospel, but he went to seek a spot where the great experiment might be tried; this at length he found in the State of Indiana, by the banks of the Wabash.

Early in the present century the spirit of enthusiasm and religious earnestness fell upon a country preacher near Stuttgart, whose name was Rapp; he did not revolt from the doctrines of his Lutheran Church, but he sought to infuse into its ceremonies a new fervour; he was first treated with coldness; he was then visited with persecution. He had gathered round him many followers whose hearts yearned for a purer service and a holier life; they refused to attend the cold formalities of the state church, the authorities resented this breach of the law, and the Rappites were forced to moderate their zeal, or to quit their

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. ii. p. 249.

country. The pastor was offered an asylum in another part of Germany and in France; but the finger of the Lord pointed to the West, and the preacher obeyed the summons; in 1803 he sailed for America, and the year after he was followed by 150 families. The pilgrims at first settled in Pennsylvania, but in 1814 they moved farther west to Indiana; there they built a town, and called it Harmony. The society was constituted after the pattern of the early Christians; they were all of one heart and one soul; none claimed aught as his own; they had all things in common; each followed a trade. Besides this, they renounced carnal love, and aspired to celibate perfection; but they sought to unite these virtues with the holy joy of family life. Each family had a house apart, and a plot of ground; they possessed a cow and several swine, besides poultry; all other things, however, they procured from the common store, which was supplied by the common labour. Religion was the basis upon which the whole fabric rested—Rapp was lawgiver and priest. Yet much importance was not assigned to dogma, for they demanded no tests; they received with open arms, as brethren in the Lord, all who came to them, whose lives were pure, and whose hearts were fixed on heavenly things. "If he (the new-comer) is rich, he deposits all his property in the common stock; if he is poor, he has no lack."* During the day they tend the vineyards; they cultivate the ground; they spin cotton. In the evening they assemble in the church: they sing psalms; they offer to heaven the incense of a pure heart; they listen to the admonitions

* Melish, 'Travels in United States,' vol. ii. p. 80.

of their pastor. Men say they are ignorant, and despise the refinements of civilization; but what matters it to them? they are abundantly supplied with this world's goods—they are richly endowed with the blessings of the Spirit; they are permitted to enjoy a peculiar share of its power and grace; the phenomena of religious enthusiasm are seldom absent. "There is no vicious habit among them; there is not an instance of swearing or lying, or debauchery of any kind; and as to cheating, so commonly practised in civilized society, they have no temptation to it whatever. As individuals they have no use for money, and they have no fear of want."* No wonder they prospered; when they left Germany they brought with them twenty-five dollars a-piece; their riches had now multiplied a hundredfold. It was to this Edèn of the western land that Owen turned; rumours had gone abroad that the community wished to move back near to their original settlement in Pennsylvania; this proved to be true; and Owen became the purchaser of Harmony for 140,000 dollars.

The property consisted of 30,000 acres, of which the Rappites had cleared 2500; the land bordering the river was flat and occasionally inundated; the town was situated at a little distance upon rising ground, and at the back were hills planted with vineyards or covered by primeval forest; the river was navigable for boats of forty tons, and it abounded with fish. Owen advertised for inhabitants, and with astonishing alacrity the want was supplied; before three months had elapsed, he found himself surrounded

* Melish, vol. ii. p. 79.

by nine hundred disciples of the new system. They had responded to his appeal from mixed motives; there were some enthusiasts who had come, at great personal sacrifice, to face a rude life and to mix among rude men, who had no object but to work out the great problem of a New Society; there were others who fancied they could secure abundance with little labour, prepared to shirk their share in the toil, but not to forego their share in the reward.

On the 27th of August, 1825, Mr. Owen collected them together in the public hall, and in an opening address explained the object he had in view; he could not expect, he said, an immediate transition from the system of competition to that of co-operation; old habits cannot be easily put away; it is to the next generation rather than to the present that we must look for entire success. Still, much can now be done. New Harmony is intended as "a halfway house, a temporary resting-place, where we can change our old garments and fully prepare ourselves for the new state of existence into which we hope to enter."* It was accordingly agreed that the community resolve itself into a "Preliminary Society," from which, after the probation of a year, some, or perhaps all, might be prepared to enter into the promised land of common labour and equal distribution. In the meantime, a store was organized at which each man had a debtor and credit account; if at the end of a year he was so fortunate as to find a balance in his favour, he might withdraw the half, provided the sum did not exceed 100 dollars, and proceed on a journey of plea-

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' no. 1, p. 2.

sure. He must, however, first receive the permission of the community, which he can only expect to obtain if his labour can be dispensed with for a time without inconvenience. If he prefers to remain at home, he can only withdraw his surplus in the usual goods supplied by the store. New members will not be received unless they bring their own tools with them, and their household furniture; they must be ready to accept whatever room is assigned to them, and also to subscribe to the articles of the Preliminary Society. A perfect equality of rank and privilege will be established among all members, but, as before stated, the remuneration will, for the present, be proportional to the services rendered. Any one who wishes to leave the society can do so at a week's notice; he will receive back the value of what he brought with him, and the balance in his favour at the store. Having completed these necessary arrangements, Owen left for England in June. A committee had been previously elected to carry out his instructions and to direct the affairs of the settlement; one of its first acts was to forbid the retail of spirituous liquors; a bell rang when the time had arrived for the workman to suspend his daily toil, but it was left to the silent admonition of the village clock to assemble them together for labour. The followers of Rapp were accustomed to meet in the evening in their village church to seek the Lord, and they had found prosperity and peace; the profane disciples of the New System met for riotous mirth, for dancing, for discussion, for the unholy exercise of the carnal mind; they had abandoned their gods, and the gods seemed to have abandoned them. The 'New Harmony Ga-

zette' reflects in some degree the confusion of the new settlers; those daring men stood upon the ashes of a volcano, at the brink of chaos; beneath them were the broken fragments of creeds, dying indeed, but not yet deprived of their venom; before them they peered into the darkness whither God and the Spirit-land had vanished from before their eyes. At the corners of the street, and in the market-place, among the vineyards on the hills, and in the hall of assembly, groups of men were everywhere to be seen earnestly discussing the New Views. "Is man wholly the creature of circumstance?" "How far can he be held responsible?" "Is the Bible true?" "Does the devil exist?" "Is there a God?" "Does Providence direct the affairs of earth?" "Is the soul enwrapped in eternal flame, or received into endless bliss?" "Does the soul exist?" "Beyond death is there life?" Such were the questions that engaged the attention and occupied the time of men who till then had been clearing forests in the backwoods, and artisans who had been plying their trades in great cities. Preachers of every denomination were freely permitted to preach and exhort; at first many flocked to the new settlement, eager to restore the lost sheep to the sacred fold, but at length their numbers decreased, till finally they came no more that way; in truth, they had to pass through an ordeal equalled only by the hot flames of persecution. No preacher was suffered to open his mouth unless he were prepared, at the conclusion of his discourse, to support his testimony by facts that would convince a backwoodsman, and by arguments that would sa-

tisfy the disputatious proclivities of the intelligent artisan.*

When Owen returned, in January, 1826, he found that these burning controversies had excited the usual intensity of hate.† The old religions were hastening to dissolution, but the new religion of charity had not yet sprung from their dying embers. He found, moreover, that the people who had assembled were ill assorted; the idle, who preponderated, were jealous of the advantages that fell to industry, and clamoured lustily for the establishment of absolute Communism. Though painfully conscious how unsuited were their antecedents and present condition to enter upon the promises, Owen was unable longer to resist the popular cry; accordingly, on the 25th of January, 1826, seven persons were chosen by universal suffrage to frame the constitution of the "New Harmony Community of Equality." Of these seven there were two sons of Owen—William and Robert Dale.

The New Constitution accorded an equality of rights, uninfluenced by sex or condition, to all adults. Women were not, however, allowed to vote for the members of the executive, nor had they a voice in the popular assembly. The constitution declared itself based on the principles of "equality of duties, modified by physical and moral conformation, co-operative union in the business and amusements of life, community of property, freedom of speech, obedience to the laws of the country" in which it exists. It asserts that no man is born with rights either of possession or of

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. ii. p. 48.

† 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. ii. p. 48. 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i. p. 207.

exemption superior to those of his fellows; that the character is not formed by the individual, and that, therefore, artificial rewards and punishments are equally inapplicable. Kindness it declares to be the only consistent mode of treatment. It enacts, "that all shall have similar food, clothing, and education, as near as can be furnished for all, according to their ages; and, as soon as practicable, all shall live in similar houses, and in all respects be accommodated alike." The community is to be governed by a General Assembly and an Executive Council: the first to consist of every male over twenty-one years of age; the other will be composed of seven members—a secretary and six heads of departments. The whole community itself will be divided into six departments, and each department into occupations; every one will be a member of an occupation, for no one can be exempted from labour; every individual above sixteen shall have a vote for the intendent of his occupation; the intendents thus chosen will elect the superintendent of their department. In this manner four of the members of the Executive Council will be selected; the other three will be chosen by the universal suffrage of the General Assembly. These will be the Secretary, the Commissary, and the Treasurer; the two latter will act as superintendents of the departments of Domestic Economy and Commerce. All these persons are to hold office only during the pleasure of the General Assembly; every week the Assembly is to register its opinion of the character of all the superintendents; each superintendent of every intendent; each intendent of all the members of his occupation; thus will a searching in-

quisition supply the place of a police. The property will remain for ever in trust for the community; no individual can assert any private claims upon it. Such compensation for services as justice may require will be given to any one who may choose to leave; the matter will be arranged by the Executive, subject to appeal to the Assembly. The children of deceased members will enjoy all the rights of members.* Lastly, it was decreed that all who aspired to enter the "New Harmony Community of Equality" must sign this constitution. Most of the members of the Preliminary Society found no difficulty. It must be remembered they had to declare their belief in Fatalism. Now, however self-evident may be the truth of this doctrine, it ought not to have been forgotten that there are many persons in the Old World who are strangely unable to seize self-evident truths; in pity for them, dogmatism, and hence division, might have been avoided. There were some, evidently persons of weak intellect, who fancied themselves free agents, and who sought to prove their freedom by refusing to join the Fatalist Community; these formed an association of their own two miles from the town, and were generally regarded with contempt as bigots, who would not receive the new light.†

Notwithstanding this division, the adoption of the new constitution appears for a time to have been successful. The editor of the 'New Harmony Gazette' writes, "Our streets no longer exhibit groups of idle talkers, but each one is busily engaged in the occupa-

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 301.

† 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i. p. 166.

tion he has chosen; the public meetings, instead of being the arena of contending orators, have assumed a different character, and are now places of business. No vain disputations now grate on the ear of patient industry."* While this improvement had taken place among the adult population, means were in active preparation for the education and training of the children. The discourses of Mr. Owen had attracted the attention of Mr. Maclure, the President of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia. This gentleman was somewhat advanced in life, of a generous but impulsive nature—swift to wrath, but earnest in love; he possessed a large fortune, and a magnificent library; he placed both at the service of New Harmony; he offered to share the expense of the great experiment, and to assist it with his learning and experience. He bought from Owen a tract of 900 acres, close to the town, and determined to establish upon it an agricultural school after the pattern of Pestalozzi. The system of that great educational reformer had been introduced into America a few years previously by M. Phiquepal and Mme. Frétageot; these enterprising persons were induced to leave Philadelphia, to enter upon a larger sphere of exertion at New Harmony; they arrived in January, 1826. In a short time they had accommodation for 1000 children, and were actually instructing 400; they expected the members would soon increase, for the expense of the education was only 100 dollars a year, and included food and clothing.†

The apparent prosperity lasted but a short time;

* Vol. i. p. 207. † 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 373.

Owen's fears were well-grounded; and it soon became evident that the change from the Preliminary Society to pure Communism had been premature. The constitution was too complicated to work; the individual felt only a remote interest in the welfare of the whole; some became idle, and a charge upon the rest. The industrious found they did not reap the fruit of their industry; unmarried men complained they had to support the burden of a family without experiencing its consolations. Women, in particular, were singularly sensitive lest they should be betrayed into more labour than strictly fell to their share; hence arose endless jealousy and discontent, not less formidable than the disputatious ardour of the Preliminary Society. An expedient was resorted to that promised to remove these obstacles to progress. Owen declared himself willing to let land upon certain conditions,* to any number of persons, who, from intimate knowledge of one another, were prepared to associate together. Two colonies were thus speedily formed; they were quite independent of one another, and of the parent society from which they had separated; they made their own laws, and were united only by friendship, and for purposes of exchange. The first was called Macluria; it had about 1200 acres, and consisted of

* These were—1. That it shall be held for the use of co-operative communities of equality in rights and property, and shall not be divided into individual shares and separate interests. 2. That any surplus property over and above paying off debts, and the cost of the land, shall go to establish other communities, and on no pretext be divided into individual shares. 3. There shall be no whiskey or distilled liquors made in the community. The lease was for 10,000 years. ('New Harmony Gazette,' vol. iii. p. 204.)

120 persons. Owen lent them money at four per cent., and they built a separate village for themselves, in which they dwelt. The constitution they adopted resembled in many respects that of the parent society. It was honourably distinguished from it in others, for it repudiated all metaphysical and religious controversy. The executive functions were not confided to superintendents, but to a "council of fathers." These were to be chosen from the oldest members of the community, under sixty-five.* The other colony was called Feiba-Peveli; its numbers were fewer, the extent of land it cultivated was about the same, and its organization is said to have been better.† These had completed their separation as early as March or April, 1826; in July they were followed by another, limited to thirty families, for experience had proved that difficulties increase in proportion to the numbers. It was for this reason found advisable to form each occupation as it were into a separate community. Men of the same trade, with the same tastes, who held the same status in old society, who met daily at the same avocations, were more easily joined together in interest and sympathy than a heterogeneous mass who could have no sentiment in common. An individual member of a large gang of workmen might not unreasonably fancy that his exertions would produce a very inappreciable effect on the general result; but when the gang is broken up into small companies, then the effort of each labourer may be clearly perceived. Hence the new colonies were divided into occupations, and an account at the store was opened with each.

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i. p. 209. † *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 226.

The movement continued steadily in the same direction. Early in 1827 the town of New Harmony had become a central village, surrounded by no less than eight independent colonies. "These operations," said Owen in a public address in May, 1827, "have been going forward so successfully that perhaps no pleasure has been more pure than that which I have enjoyed for some time past in my daily visit to some one of these new establishments, where by the industry of the persons engaged I saw the sure foundation laid of independence for themselves, and for their children's children, through many generations." And yet this result had not been produced without one failure and much distress. Macluria, having lasted for a year, was dissolved in March, 1827. The lands were sold to a community of Germans, consisting of fifteen families, who had come to try the New Views.* The breaking up into independent colonies had caused much suffering; there were men there with whom none would associate; it is true they were the idle and vicious, for whom in the Old World little sympathy is felt. Not so a disciple of the Rational Religion; he knows that man is a creature of circumstance—an object of compassion, but not of scorn. Hence it will be readily believed that Owen suffered much. "It was," he said, "the most unpleasant and trying period I had to pass through, for my object in coming here was to benefit all, and if possible to injure none."†

Nor was this the only source of distress to the benevolent philanthropist. The educational system from which he anticipated so much had proved, from

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. ii. p. 206. † *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 255.

his point of view, a failure. The various teachers instead of cordially uniting had each set up for himself; hence he says, "The object which I had the most at heart could not be attained, the children were educated in different habits, dispositions, and feelings, when it was my most earnest desire that *all* the children should be educated in similar habits and dispositions, and be brought up truly as members of one large family without a single discordant feeling." This evil he sought to remedy by opening a rival institution of his own, more in accordance with the New Views. The public disapprobation Owen had expressed of the system under the direction of Mr. Maclure had deeply offended that gentleman; his love turned to hate, and in the fury of his passion he forgot his philanthropy. Monetary transactions had passed between him and Owen; he had bought his land for 40,000 dollars, but the debt had not yet been discharged. Mr. Owen had signed a note contracting to pay a portion of the purchase-money of New Harmony to Mr. Rapp upon a certain date. As the time approached Mr. Maclure agreed to discharge this bill for Owen, and fancied that he would thereby more than pay off his own debt; he thought Mr. Owen had not sufficient cash at his command to discharge the balance which he imagined would be thus due to him, and he determined to expose him to the indignity of an arrest. In the Mount Vernon jail Mr. Owen might perhaps become a convert to the Maclurian system of education, at all events he would have an opportunity of retracting his objections; but unfortunately the calculations upon which this magnificent stroke of policy was founded proved to be false; when

the account came to be made up the balance was found to be against Maclure, and the prophet of the New Views escaped the debtors' prison. Such were some of the indignities and disappointments he had to endure; yet they weighed but lightly in the balance when compared with the triumph he anticipated. Already he had the satisfaction to see his principles extending throughout America, and various experiments begun. Sixty miles above New York, on the Hudson River, a community was modelled after the pattern of New Harmony, and was known by the name of the "Franklin Community;"* another, called the "Owen Community," purchased 2100 acres, including nearly the whole town of Kendal, in the State of Ohio; † another settled in the Great Valley, twenty miles from Lancaster and forty from Philadelphia. We hear also of the Alleghany Association at Pittsburgh, and the Blue Spring at Bloomington in Indiana.

But there was one community that deserves especial mention. It was founded in the western district of Tennessee, 14 miles from Memphis, and 800 miles up the Mississippi River; it was called Nashoba, and was established by Miss Frances Wright, a lady of considerable talent and most undoubted courage. She had perceived that virtue bears a direct proportion to happiness, and happiness can only be attained by freedom; but political oppression is the least of the evils of tyranny; public opinion inflicts more poignant suffering, and produces even more disastrous effects. Nashoba was intended as a refuge for the independent thinker, where, without fear of a social ban, he might

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i. p. 287. † *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 349.

carry out the dictates of his conscience; in consequence, "religion occupies no place in the creed of the Institution," and the moral code was greatly simplified; human happiness is the only test of morals; whatever tends to produce happiness is moral; whatever tends to produce misery is evil. Now, marriage, every one will admit, is highly disagreeable; to be united for life to a woman or a man for whom we have ceased to have any sympathy is not consistent with the pursuit of happiness, or, what is the same thing, of virtue; consequently, "the marriage law existing without the pale of the Institution is of no force within that pale." There can, indeed, be nothing more anomalous or productive of greater misery than the laws which now regulate the relation between the sexes; a fictitious sanctity has been ascribed to the exercise of an unnatural restraint. In wedded life the woman sacrifices her independence, and becomes part of the property of her husband; affections are outraged by a union that cannot be dissolved when the heart is chilled; a connection, unhallowed by sacerdotal benediction, inflicts a crushing penalty on the woman, and brands with infamy the offspring of love. Irregular indulgence is frequently visited with the vilest forms of disease; it extinguishes the most sacred flame that can glow in the heart of man; it transforms the tenderest and the loveliest woman into a hardened and despicable outcast; nor is chastity more than a degree less of evil. Our hospitals and asylums are filled with terrible proofs of the Nemesis of Nature; in Nashoba this long roll of misery will have no existence. Each man will seek the partner for whom his heart yearns;

their union may be eternal, but it will not outlive the affections; from the moment the heart has ceased to love the connection will be dissolved; for the children there is no fear; they are the charge of the community, and their condition is not affected by the separation of their parents; in a society based upon private property this arrangement will admit of modification. We will, then, "not inquire if a mother be a wife, or a father a husband; but if parents can supply to the creatures they have brought into being all things requisite to render existence a blessing; let the force of public opinion be brought against the thoughtless ignorance and cruel selfishness which so frequently multiplies offspring beyond the resources of the parents;" and yet this point, which to the rational mind is of paramount importance, is precisely the one systematically overlooked by the old society. Provided children are begotten according to law, no penalty descends upon the married sensualists, who, for their own gratification, bring into existence creatures for whom they can neither provide food nor education; and that blackest crime, compared with which fornication and even adultery are trivial, perpetuating hereditary disease and madness, is suffered to pass over without even a whisper of condemnation.* No black

* It is impossible not to admire the exquisite simplicity of the marriage system in old society. The moral feelings bearing upon the subject are also to be commended for a like reason. The whole question is reduced to a mere matter of registration. A union duly entered in the vestry of the parish church becomes at once laudable, and the children that result, being legal, are naturally a source of pride. Accordingly, a curate who has fourteen children and nothing for them to eat is peculiarly admirable, and deserving of unqualified sympathy and re-

could become a member of New Harmony; they could only be employed as helpers;* but the liberality of Miss Wright knew no restraint; the blacks were permitted in her establishment to possess property, and finally to emancipate themselves by their labour. No distinction whatever was suffered to exist between black and white children; they were brought up together at the same school, and inherited the same privileges.

Such was the bold defiance hurled at the beginning of this century by a young English lady against the opinions and prejudices of society.† Nor did she long remain without sympathy. The 'New Harmony Ga-

spect. Some persons, however, whose moral faculties are slightly deranged, have thought that an ecclesiastical ceremony, however vital in itself, is not the sole condition of a moral union. One writer has even attempted to show that "causing the existence of a human being is one of the most responsible actions in the range of human life. To undertake this responsibility—to bestow a life which may be either a curse or a blessing, unless the being on whom it is bestowed will have at least the ordinary chances of a desirable existence, is a crime against that being." (J. S. Mill, 'On Liberty,' p. 194.) Mr. Mill is inclined to think that this condition is not necessarily fulfilled, even though the certificate of marriage is perfectly correct. He entertains also some singular opinions respecting women, based upon a supposition which in the present state of our knowledge is incapable of proof, viz. that woman is a rational being, and can rise to be the companion and even the equal of man, instead of being, as in old society, first his plaything, and afterwards his tormentor. This absurd delusion leads Mr. Mill to anticipate a time when huge families will be effectually prevented by the prudence of independent women, who will refuse to undertake a burden, the weight of which falls principally upon them. (Polit. Econ. book iv. chap. vii.). It is unnecessary to point out to the ordinary reader the absurdity of these opinions; yet such is the influence of idle theories, that they may in time produce a change in the conduct even of respectable people.

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i. p. 2.

† It would appear that Miss Wright ultimately yielded to the

zette' proves that her opinions speedily found disciples. In April, 1826, we read of a couple being married in New Harmony Hall; they stood up in the meeting, and tock one another by the hand, saying, "I do agree to take this woman (man) to be my wife (husband), and I declare that I submit to any other ceremony upon this occasion only in conformity with the laws of the State." An editorial note dilates upon "the absurdity of the present form of marriage, according to which the future husband and wife are compelled solemnly to promise to love each other during their whole lives, while at the same time they are conscious that their affections do not depend for one hour upon themselves." In the following July Mr. Owen thought it expedient publicly to give his sanction to the new doctrine. He had discovered an era in the History of Mankind when a few leading individuals invented religion. These ingenious persons managed about the same time to seize the property of the people, and to appropriate it to themselves; they completed their remarkable achievements by establishing matrimony, by which they secured to themselves the same privileges in woman which they had seized in property; henceforth they could tempt the most beautiful ladies by the allurements of their wealth, and then subjugate them to their pleasure. It was in this manner that the poor were despoiled of their rights, and women of their liberty, and thus came into being Religion, Private Property, and Marriage, which in the blasphemous licence of his language he did not

bondage of the old law, for we hear of her afterwards as Mme. d'Arusmont. ('The Crisis,' London, 1833, vol. ii. p. 19.)

hesitate to call "The Trinity of Evil." It must henceforth be the great object of a Social Reformer to stamp out these demoniacal institutions; Religion must be annihilated, that man may no longer shrink with terror from the darkness of the tomb; Private Property must be abolished, that the poor may no more be dependent for life on the caprice of the few; Marriage must cease, that love may regain its power. Mr. Owen viewed this extravagant proceeding with even more complacency than his speech at the London Tavern. He compares what he calls the "Declaration of Mental Independence" to the Declaration of American Independence, which had occurred fifty years before; indeed, his achievement quite eclipsed the latter, inasmuch as "for the first time in the records of man, a foundation has been laid for real virtue and permanent happiness."* Both he and his followers were sincere in their belief, that a new era had indeed begun; the future numbers of the 'New Harmony Gazette,' besides the day of the month, thus indicated the year: "1st year of Mental Independence; 51st year of American Independence; 1826th year of Christ." Mr. Owen perceived that one of the main sources of dissension proceeded from a want of sympathy among the members; he, therefore, proposed that meetings be held three times a week, after the working hours, for conversation, lectures, and general instruction.* He took an active share in them until his departure for England in June, 1827. During the winter months they had to be discontinued; and the editor of the 'New Harmony Gazette' complains that the progress

* 'New Harmony Gazette,' vol. i p. 329.

of the colony has again failed to answer expectations. In November, Owen sailed again from Liverpool; his way this time was by New Orleans. Not satisfied to be a Social Reformer, he determined also to enter on a crusade against Religion; he delivered a course of lectures at New Orleans, in which he indulged in his usual energy of expression; he wound up by proceeding to challenge any clergyman who chose to enter the lists against him to a public discussion of the Faith: The gauntlet was finally taken up by Mr. A. Campbell; but we need not follow Mr. Owen into the intricate mazes of theology.

On his arrival at New Harmony in February, 1828, he again met with severe disappointment. He called a meeting in April, in which he declared that the leases he had given "have been, with few exceptions, applied for individual purposes and individual gains, and, in consequence, they must return again into my hands." "The last experiment," he continues, "has made it evident that families trained in the individual system, founded as it is upon superstition, have not acquired those moral qualities of forbearance and charity for each other which are necessary to promote full confidence and harmony among all the members, and without which communities cannot exist." The retailer of foreign produce had acquired a monopoly which proved highly injurious to the interests of the colony; not alone this, for competition, that scourge of modern society, had actually dared to invade New Harmony; whiskey-shops and petty stores had sought to compete one against the other. This appearance of the old leaven was highly

CHAPTER V.

EARLY HISTORY OF CO-OPERATION.

"Rien de grand n'a de grand commencement. On ne trouvera pas dans l'histoire de tous les siècles une seule exception à cette règle; 'Crescit occulto velut arbor ævo;' c'est la devise éternelle de toute grande institution."—*De Maistre.*

BEFORE Mr. Owen appeared as the Apostle of Association, we only hear of the existence of three Co-operative Societies; of these, two remain, and one has long since failed; the earliest in date was founded at Hull, in 1795. A few persons formed a society for the sale of the necessaries of life, at lower prices than were current among the ordinary retailers;* this association having existed for many years on a very modest scale, its benefits being limited to the members, has recently received a stimulus from the success at Rochdale, and is now in a highly prosperous condition.

In October, 1806, twenty-six of the workmen in the

* Their transactions were more particularly in wheat and flour. ('Manchester Co-operator,' vol. vii. p. 357.)

arsenal at Woolwich, determined to resist the extortionate demands of the shopkeepers;* they each subscribed 10*s.* 6*d.*, and with the amount so raised, they sent one of themselves to Smithfield, where for £20 they purchased a bullock; it was found that in this manner the price of their meat was reduced exactly one-half, from 9*d.* to 4½*d.*; their first effort had been generally ridiculed, but its success could not now be denied. They were speedily joined by a large number of other workmen, and were soon able to rent a shed at £20 per annum, where they occasionally had as many as fifteen cattle at a time. It was not long before they acted upon the same principle in respect to other articles of their consumption: they bought tea by the chest; butter by the load; plums for their Christmas pudding by wholesale; they contracted for bread at a reduced price. The movement while it lasted was very successful, but the termination of the war put an end to its existence; the workmen were thrown out of employment to relapse into misery.†

Co-operation, extinguished at Woolwich, reappeared at Devonport: in 1815, a shop for the sale of bread was opened in the town; a corn mill was erected at Ivybridge, thirteen miles distant; it still exists, under the name of "Union Mill;" to the bakery was added a coal association, which shares its prosperity. It is remark-

* The copy of the 'Economist' from which I have taken these particulars is to be found in the British Museum. The date is so indistinct that it might be either 1806 or 1816; I have assumed the former in consequence of the allusion to the termination of the war with which the story closes.

† The 'Economist,' No. 11, p. 170.

able that both these societies have practised a system that has not proved so successful elsewhere; credit is given, and the retailers are undersold.*

But Mr. Owen was now before the world as the advocate of association upon a more magnificent scale; in January, 1821, the first number appeared of a weekly journal called the 'Economist;' the editor was a disciple of Mr. Owen, and his object was to disseminate a knowledge of the New Views.† In some respects, however, there was an important difference between them; the editor rejected a few of Mr. Owen's scientific opinions, and the whole of his religion and metaphysics.‡ The 'Economist' was more concerned in the purely practical aspect of social questions; it proposed to explain to the working classes in what manner they could better their own condition, without exciting opposition by challenging popular prejudices.

Shortly before the appearance of this new publication a few journeymen printers in London had formed "The Co-operative and Economical Society." They met at the office of the 'Economist,' at the Medallic Cabinet, 158, Strand; there they discussed the New Views, and determined if possible to carry them into effect. They proposed to form a working community

* 'Manchester Co-operator,' vol. iv. p. 87; vol. viii. p. 199—"There are now 120 sacks of flour baked weekly by the association."

† The title of the paper is 'The Economist,' a Periodical Paper explanatory of the New System of Society, projected by Robert Owen, Esq., and of a Plan of Association for improving the Condition of the Working Classes during their Continuation at their present Employments.'

‡ The 'Economist,' p. 106.

in London; it was to consist of 250 families, who would live together, either under the same roof or in neighbouring houses; the former, if feasible, was of course to be preferred. Each family would pay £1 a week into the common fund; they would follow different trades, and in the end they would aspire to form a community sufficiently numerous to employ the whole of the members upon the establishment. Even while restricted to 250 families, they might fairly expect to save £7,780 a year out of their slender means. If collected under thesame ro of, £1600 would be economized in rent; the building would be warmed by a stove, the food would be cooked at a common fire and served in a public room, and there would thus be a saving of £900 a year in fuel and light. It would be the same with every other article of their consumption; they would kill their own meat, and thereby save 2½*d.* in every pound; they would bake their own bread, make their own clothes, brew their own beer, purchase tea and sugar wholesale, at a profit of 10 per cent. Instead of working for others they would work for themselves; instead of the profits of their industry falling to their employers, it would become their own. But the benefits of the institution would not end even there. The economy effected would produce a large surplus; the weekly subscription of £1 would therefore secure all the advantages of a benefit society. It would be sufficient to afford a provision for the aged, the sick, and, above all, to provide education for the children. Thus the ignorance which is a leading cause of distress might be removed by the efforts of the people themselves, and the basis of future improvement solidly

laid. Such were the benefits they anticipated from association.*

It was unhappily not within their power to make the attempt; they found it impossible to collect eligible associates who shared their enthusiasm. After a few months of hopeless endeavour they were obliged to reduce their labours to much humbler proportions; they determined to raise a stock amongst themselves in shares of five shillings each; their operations would be limited for the present to purchasing goods at wholesale prices; they would charge five per cent. on the prime cost, in order to defray the expense of the store and the wages of the salesman. But they did not abandon but only postpone their original intention of living together in a community; it was therefore resolved, "That the Society keep constantly in view, as one of their ultimate and most important objects, next to the general extension and introduction of the principles on which they are united, the acquisition of an establishment in which they may unrestrainedly proceed upon the plan of social arrangements projected

* "Upon the most mature reflection," they write in their report, "we are thoroughly convinced that, so long as we continue to act upon the isolated plan which has been hitherto pursued, we must ever be haunted by the painful apprehension of being engulfed in that vortex of pauperism which the decreasing demand for human labour is daily enlarging; and that it is only by associating together in the mode proposed that the catastrophe can be averted; but we are also convinced that by combining our industry, our skill, and our mental faculties, we shall not merely bid defiance to poverty, but secure a competency of the goods of life, a vast accession of intellectual enjoyments and rational amusements, and, above all, the means of giving such an education to our children as shall ensure to them an adequate portion of useful knowledge, and confirm them in virtuous habits." ('Economist,' p. 93.)

by that great benefactor of mankind, Mr. Owen, of New Lanark."*

This example was speedily followed in the country. In the same year we learn that a society was being formed at Newcastle upon the principles of co-operation; we are not surprised to hear that it was set on foot by the Society of Friends, who are always foremost in every good work.† In Glasgow a co-operative bakery was established in 1822.‡

It was towards the end of the year 1824 that a few individuals met together in a hired room in Burton Street, Burton Crescent, to discuss the great problems of competition and association. Due notice was given of each meeting, and the public were freely invited to take part in the proceedings. The situation was found not sufficiently central, and they subsequently removed, first to Chancery Lane, and then to Red Lion Square; they assumed the name of the "London Co-operative Society," and every week their numbers multiplied. As yet their exertions were mainly confined to discussion and literary labours; Mr. Owen explained the New System with his accustomed amplitude of detail; Mr. Combe exhibited a model of his projected building at Orbiston; Mr. Hamilton, of Dalzell, gave the Society his countenance and the *prestige* of his rank; the meetings were enlivened by controversy. Political economists of the school of Malthus disputed the soundness of the New Views, and sought to excite terror by dismal forebodings. Pamphlets were issued to explain

* The 'Economist,' p. 237. † *Ibid.* p. 268.
‡ 'Manchester Co-operator,' vol. iii. p. 102.

the principles of co-operation and to disseminate a knowledge of its advantages; lectures were delivered, and at length a new journal was started. The first number of the 'Co-operative Magazine and Monthly Herald' was published on 1st January, 1826.

It existed in various forms for four years, and rendered important service to the cause. Its pages may still be read with interest, for they enable us to trace the origin of the co-operative movement. For some time the establishment of a store might be taken as a sure indication that its originators were striving to form a happy village, where they might enjoy mutual co-operation and equal distribution. "The very foundation" (we are informed*) "of the system of co-operation which we advocate is equality and community of wealth (land and capital) amongst all the members, limiting individual appropriations to those articles which are in the course of individual consumption." The early efforts in this direction were truly magnificent; the failure was generally complete. Usually the capital was to be raised, in shares, partly by the assistance of rich philanthropists or speculative capitalists, partly by the savings of industrious workmen.† At one time it was proposed to start a communistic village within fifty miles of London, with a capital of £200,000; at another, 2000 acres of land were to be taken, the distinctions between the sexes were to be levelled, the rivalries of old society were to cease, its cares to vanish; every child would be edu-

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 231.

† In those early days the sum thought necessary for an experiment varied from £20,000 up to one million.

cated; the charge of the sick and aged would devolve upon the community. The new Eden was to be in the county of Cork; its projector was Mr. William Thompson, author of the 'Distribution of Wealth.'* At Exeter something was actually achieved; meetings were held in May 1826 under the presidency of the Hon. Mr. Dawson; the co-operative principle was explained; a few persons agreed to pay a weekly subscription towards the formation of an agricultural community,† others volunteered large sums; at length thirty-seven acres of land were purchased seven miles from the town; thirteen co-operators of different trades went to work without delay; a hundred families were waiting, anxious to join;‡ in a short time twelve cottages had been built, and it was intended to erect a barrack, at a cost of £1000, capable of holding 400 families.§ There, in the pure enjoyment of the country, apart from the corrupting influences of a great city, they might carry on their trades and reap the advantages of communistic life. A Mr. Vesey had been the main mover in these proceedings; he had directed them with skilful economy; he had offered to support them with substantial assistance;‖ unhappily his zeal decreased; he failed to pay the money that it was said he had promised. The establishment had to be broken

* Mr. Thompson died in 1833, and left his property to found a Co-operative Agricultural Community. Mr. William Pare, afterwards literary executor to Mr. Owen, was appointed trustee. The family of Mr. Thompson disputed the will, and the property passed into Chancery. ('Manchester Co-operator,' vol. vii. p. 528.) In August 1865 a writer asserted that it was still there (*op. cit.* vol. vi. p. 85).

† 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 194. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 226.

§ *Ibid.* p. 265. ‖ *Ibid.* p. 297.

up. It is stated that some of the members took another farm in the neighbourhood, and continued the experiment some time longer.

It is rarely possible to force prosperity upon another, and those who seek for assistance are precisely the persons least likely to benefit by it. Hitherto the co-operators had sought the countenance of the rich, they looked to them for the means to carry out their schemes; in some cases they were not disappointed, but the help they obtained was of no avail, for the qualities necessary to success were wanting. Not till January 1827 were there any indications of a more independent course of action.* Then there appeared an article with the heading, "Do for Yourselves," and from that time the friends of co-operation determined to act upon the motto, "Union is Power." Wherever there were a few disciples of the new system a society would be formed; each member would subscribe 1*d.* to 3*d.* a week, and the sum so collected would be sent to London, to a "Central Co-operative Fund Association." Thus, in time, a sufficient amount might be collected to establish a community upon the principle of mutual co-operation and equal distribution; every country society would have the privilege of sending one out of every 50 or 100 of their members to the new community.† In this way a few individuals would be rescued from the evils of old society, and a beginning would be made of the social revolution. It was with this object that some workmen began to meet together in April 1827 at West Street, Brighton; they determined to accelerate the movement by every means

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. ii. pp. 28, 226. † *Ibid.* p. 510.

in their power; not satisfied with the slow accumulation of 1*d.* or 3*d.* a week, they resolved to form also a Trading Society, and to apply the profits to the same object; the capital was to be £100, to be raised in shares of £5 each, to be paid for at the rate of 1*s.* a week. At the first meeting every share was taken; encouraged by this success they increased the capital to £150; they began to trade at once; they bought the articles most in demand by wholesale and sold them at the usual retail prices; the profits were carefully re-invested, for they did not seek present advantage, but, as their secretary, Mr. Bryan, said, "to purchase or rent land, and to commence the principles of co-operation and community of property, and thereby show to the world that equality of distribution may be reconciled with perfect security." * In six months the members increased from 30 to 200, and the capital in like proportion.† The movement had extended to Worthing, where there was an association consisting of eighty members.‡ In January 1828 these were followed by the establishment of the "Sussex Trading Association." § At length the Old Adam appeared in the New Vineyard, and a division arose; there were some members who were in the position of small capitalists, others who were simply workmen; the former wished to derive interest from their capital, and to enjoy prosperity in old society, but the others would not agree to this sacrifice of principle; their object was to abandon altogether the system of competition, and to pass the remainder of their lives apart from the

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. ii. p. 420. † *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 3.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 42. § *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 67.

world; the small capitalists seceded, and bought a fishing boat for £140; they speedily found themselves in the receipt of a profit of £4 a week.* But whatever may have been the loss to the Association from this cause was far more than compensated by the accession of a powerful friend.

William King was born at Ipswich in 1786; he was educated at Cambridge, where he gained considerable distinction; he was elected a fellow, and afterwards studied for the medical profession; he eventually settled at Brighton, where he passed a long and highly useful life; frequently brought into the presence of suffering, his heart lost none of its tenderness; eager to seize every opportunity for doing good, the value of his services was increased by professional skill; his enthusiasm was tempered by sobriety of thought; his exertions were directed by a keen and subtle intellect. His attention was early directed to the efforts of the Co-operators in West Street; he resolved to assist them with his pen. On the 1st of May, 1828, appeared the first number of a small tract, called the 'Co-operator;' it continued monthly until August, 1830, when, having accomplished its mission, it ceased; it was the work of Dr. King, and to it may be ascribed the diffusion of co-operative knowledge. The 'Co-operator' may still be read with lively interest; it is written in a style of exquisite simplicity, warmed by a genuine enthusiasm; the expositions are lucid, the sugggestions eminently practical; no rancour against any class disfigures its pages; it loses no opportunity to enforce the necessity of self-dependence, and the value of small beginnings;

* 'Quarterly Review,' vol. xli. p. 371.

it does not oppose the magnificent schemes that dazzled the imagination of the disciples of Owen; but it insists that no superstructure can be raised till the foundations have been surely laid. What the example of Rochdale is to the later co-operators, such was the 'Co-operator' to their predecessors; it guided their efforts, it stimulated their exertions. Dr. King had the mortification to witness the movement to which he had so largely contributed entirely fail; but he lived to see it revive with renewed vitality, and the assurance of eventual triumph; he saw it spread to every civilized country in Europe, to America, and to distant colonies; his interest in the cause was unimpaired by age; he died at Brighton in 1865. He was convinced to the last that great improvements, amounting in importance to a social revolution, are in store for posterity; and he maintained that a time would assuredly come when not a pauper will remain in England.*

The month after the first number of the 'Co-operator' was published, a farm was taken on the London Road, nine miles from Brighton; it consisted of twenty-eight acres of land, and afforded occupation to four and sometimes five men; these persons were paid 4s. a week beyond the usual wages, besides receiving rent and vegetables free; they lived together, in order to profit as much as possible from the advantages of association.

The Brighton Society now began to form a library; one of the members acted as librarian, and to this im-

* 'Co-operator,' vol. iv. p. 130.

portant function he added the more onerous duties of schoolmaster.

We can best trace the object and the progress of the movement by the following advertisement, which appeared from time to time in the 'Co-operator:'—

"Societies, upon the principle of accumulating a common capital, and of investing it in trade, and so making TEN per cent. of it instead of investing it in the FUNDS at only four or four-and-a-half, with the intention of ultimately purchasing land and living in COMMUNITY, have been established at the following places:—

36, Red Lion Square, London.
37, West Street, Brighton.
10, Queen's Place, Brighton.
24, Marine Place, Worthing."

May 1, 1828,	Societies formed			4
Nov. 1,	"	"	"	7
Jan. 1829	"	"	"	12
March "	"	"	"	31
April "	"	"	"	56
May "	"	"	"	63
August "	"	"	"	70
Nov. "	"	"	"	120
Dec. "	"	"	"	130
Feb. 1830	"	"	"	172
August "	"	"	"	300"

It is very possible that these three hundred societies may have differed from one another in the details of their management, but it is certain that they were all formed with a similar object: the members were for the most part disciples of Mr. Owen; they had awakened to a consciousness of the wretchedness of their position; they were cheered by a hope of escape. At first they had trusted to the benevolence of the rich, but now they perceived that help must come

from themselves; many subscriptions of 1*d.* to 3*d.* a week would in time form a sum of money sufficient to begin an experiment. All the subscribers could not indeed share the advantages; but a commencement would be made; a success would be achieved; it might be the beginning of a social revolution that would embrace the whole labouring population in a common emancipation. From the discussions that arose, a new source of economy was discovered, and Trading Societies were formed: they were not an object in themselves, but they were used as a powerful auxiliary to the great revolution. "Trading Associations," writes the Editor of the 'Co-operative Magazine,' in 1830, "are the stepping stones as it were to co-operation among the working classes."* "Bear in mind," says an address of the same date, "that by becoming members of Trading Associations you will eventually, my friends, be enabled to enjoy the full and entire fruits of your labour and skill."† "When the capital has accumulated sufficiently," writes Dr. King in 1828, "the society may purchase land, live upon it, cultivate it themselves, and produce any manufactures they please, and so provide for all their wants of food, clothing, and houses; the society will then be called a Community. When the members are too old to work, they will still live comfortably among their friends, and end their days in peace and plenty instead of a workhouse. When a man dies, the Community will receive his widow and children into their bosom; she will not know the pangs of desertion, nor

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. iv. p. 1. † *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 18.

be obliged to send her children to the parish."* Such then was the object that first led to the establishment, upon a large scale, of co-operative societies in England. Yet it was soon found necessary slightly to modify the original plan. As the members increased in number, they could not all be expected to be animated by the same enthusiasm; the stimulus afforded by present advantage was accordingly introduced. The infant societies entered upon the dangerous experiment of competition by underselling the retail dealers. But though the plan of management was thus modified, the object remained unchanged; it was still intended that a profit should accrue to the society to be applied to the formation of a community.†

In July, 1829, the movement received a stronger

* 'Brighton Co-operator,' No. 1, p. 3.

† "The object of a Trading Association," writes the Editor of the 'Co-operative Magazine,' in 1830, "is briefly this:—to furnish most of the articles of food and ordinary consumption to its members at less prices than each member would be obliged to give at retail shops, and to accumulate a fund for the purpose of renting land for cultivation, and the formation thereon of a co-operative community. The manner in which an association of this nature is conducted is generally as follows:—it consists of a number of workmen, the more numerous the better, who are in constant employment, who out of their weekly wages pay into the hands of a treasurer a stipulated sum, say 2*s.* a week each; with the weekly total of which one of their body purchases, at *wholesale* prices, tea and sugar and bread, shoes, hats, or whatever article may be determined upon among themselves; each member will then be entitled to purchase whatever he pleases at a price considerably beneath the retail charge, but not quite so low as the article was originally purchased for, inasmuch as they agree to pay a certain percentage on the cost, which is paid into the hands of the treasurer to accumulate and to form the grand fund, upon which their hopes, as to their ultimate emancipation from the necessity of competitive labour, depend." (Vol. iv. p. 7.)

organization by the establishment of the "British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge." This Society was founded by Mr. G. Skene, and soon (February, 1830), included 308 members. The object was to publish tracts, to send out missionaries, to build public halls for lectures, to establish libraries and reading-rooms; it undertook, moreover, to effect exchanges between the various co-operative societies upon equitable terms, and to protect the members against the menaces of opponents.* This measure was particularly necessary, because, from the very beginning, there were employers of labour who thought fit to persecute the followers of the New System. We find, as early as October, 1827, that "a cultivator of a neighbouring village was forced to have his name erased" from the Brighton Association, "or lose his employment; he has 10*s*. a week."† This system of coercing the judgment is too common to excite any surprise; and, indeed, before Co-operation freed itself from its alliance with Communism, there was much in the movement to create opposition; but it appeared for a time to triumph over every difficulty, and it spread to every part of the empire.

At the quarterly meeting of the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, held at the Mechanics' Institution, London, in October, 1830, we are informed that no less than four hundred societies existed. The movement had penetrated so far north as Aberdeen; at Perth there were two societies; at Kendal they began to trade with 6*s*., and had now £200—£75 had been gained in eight months from

* 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. iv. pp. 27, 48. † *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 508.

profits; at Huddersfield operations had begun with 19*s.*, and the capital had already reached £700, the society had existed for twelve months, and numbered 250 members; at Loughborough only £138 had been subscribed, but the capital had since then been doubled by the profits; in Glasgow, a Co-operative Society was formed, in 1829, by Mr. Alexander Campbell and a few friends; it is remarkable as forming an early instance of the division of profits among members in proportion to their purchases.*

Only four years before, the co-operators little anticipated success from such a source. "The system advocated by Mr. Owen," writes the editor of the 'Co-operative Magazine' in 1826, "and properly called the Co-operative System, is not founded on the principle of trade; no very considerable saving can be effected out of the profits of wholesale and retail dealers, by a society wholly dependent on an external demand. The present cost of distribution, which frequently greatly exceeds the cost of production, can only be avoided when the producers associate in such numbers as to possess a market amongst themselves, and become the consumers of the wealth they create."† But the event soon contradicted these prognostications. At a later period, Mr. Bryan writes from Brighton, "We see no other way to get capital for commencing co-operation in the production, and equality in the distribution of wealth, but the formation of such associations."‡

* 'Manchester Co-operator,' vol. iii. p. 102.

† 'Co-operative Magazine,' vol. i. p. 32. ‡ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 508.

It is a mistake to imagine that the early Co-operative Societies were limited to stores for the retail of goods; at Manchester there was a co-operative manufactory called "The Owenian," for dyeing and dressing velveteens; it employed 120 persons, most of whom were members;* in the West Riding of York, the co-operators accumulated a capital of £5000;† in Lancashire there were 3000 members;‡ seventeen societies clustered round Halifax; they raised a capital of £3000 by trading associations, and then united into a manufacturing society; they had an agent and stand in the Cloth Market;§ at Wigan the co-operators had got possession of a farm, for which they paid £600 a year; besides a large house there were sixty cottages upon the estate, and they had established a manufactory of stockings and gown prints, at a cost of £3000; they had two machines for printing muslin and silk, and from fifty to sixty printing-tables.‖ At Liverpool a society had begun with the purchase of twelve pounds of candles, and in six months it had realized £150; they acquired a wholesale warehouse called the "North-West of England United Co-operative Company," and thirty societies did business with it;** this society resembled those in Germany for the supply of raw material; it was proposed to form another upon the same principle at Huddersfield, where twelve societies had been established.††

In October, 1832, a bazaar was opened at Liverpool, in the Royal Exchange; the room was paid for by

* 'The Crisis,' vol. i. pp. 19, 115. † *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 113.
‡ Vol. i. p. 13. § Vol. i. pp. 116, 135. ‖ Vol. i. pp. 13, 21.
** Vol. i. pp. 15, 21. †† Vol. i. pp. 19, 134.

Lady Byron;* the number of societies then amounted to 700, and it was stated that they were daily on the increase;† delegates from many of them attended the bazaar; some brought goods that had been manufactured by the members, and a large exchange was effected; there were flannels from Rochdale; linens from Barnsley; stockings and lace from Leicestershire; cutlery and teapots from Sheffield; stuffs from Halifax; shoes from Kendal; prints from the farm of Brickacre; one society had £400 worth of woollen goods, another £200 of cutlery; some of the delegates were nearly entirely clad in clothes made by co-operators.‡ In Staffordshire it was proposed to begin manufacturing crockery of every description:§ the movement had even extended to women; and at Brighton there was a society of milliners, who had a club of their own.||

But Mr. Owen had now returned from New Harmony, and his exertions were about to exercise a very important influence upon co-operation. Among the many schemes he undertook for the benefit of mankind, none excited such extravagant hopes as "The Equitable Labour Exchange;" it may also be said that none were more hopelessly inadequate to realize them; we have already seen that it had occurred to Mr. Owen that consumption is not at all in proportion to the requirements of the consumer, but to his capability of effecting a purchase—in other words, to his command of money. Now, gold and silver, of all metals, are the most worthless; their introduction into mercantile

* 'The Crisis,' vol. i. p. 134. † *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 135. ‡ Vol. i. p. 14. § Vol. i. p. 56. || Vol. i. p. 135.

transactions is quite unnecessary; the only object they effect is to produce a tyranny of capital—to give an advantage to the rich, which they use to oppress the poor; the simplest remedy, therefore, is to abolish them. All wealth is produced by labour; what standard of wealth, then, can be so equitable as a labour standard? Gold and silver contribute nothing to fertilize the earth; it is by the sweat that falls from the brow of industry that her treasures are obtained; to industry, therefore, and not to gold be the reward, for as a great writer has well said, "Celui qui mange dans l'oisiveté ce qu'il n'a pas gagné lui-même le vole." In virtue of this discovery Mr. Owen determined that henceforth labour should exchange for labour, according to principles of the strictest equity, and not through the complicated and disadvantageous medium of money; the poor would no longer require to wait on the caprice of the rich for employment; they would set themselves to work, and the article they produced would be at once accepted in the Labour Exchange; its value was to be estimated by the original cost of the raw material, and the number of hours required to work it up estimated in the currency of old society; each hour's labour would be equivalent to 6*d.*; in the exchange valuators would fix the amount of hours which in their judgment an ordinary workman would employ upon each article; he would then hand over notes to the amount, each note representing an hour; when in possession of this note the workman could exchange it for whatever goods he found in the building; he felt assured that each article he thus obtained had been valued according to the same just principle, and that, in fact, he ex-

changed his labour for a precisely equal amount of labour on the part of another.

The first difficulty this system had to encounter must be ascribed to the imperfect formation of character in old society; some persons are apt to value their labour higher than that of another; the competitive system encourages this self-deception, and a greater recompense is invariably allotted to talent and skill than to mere ignorant manual work; this is undoubtedly the case, however unjust it may seem, to reward a man merely because nature has endowed him with some peculiar gift, or because uncontrollable circumstances have placed him in a more favourable position for acquiring knowledge. It does not appear, therefore, that this ingenious plan for mitigating the inequalities of fortune was ever carried into effect. The amount chargeable upon each article for labour was estimated, indeed, in hours; but according to the nature of the work, it became possible to earn several hour-notes by the labour of one hour; thus did the old leaven creep in almost unnoticed; and, as in old society, to him who hath much, much was given.

There was another difficulty that might have become formidable, though we do not hear of its ever having arisen. The producer of goods that had become unsaleable in old society might send them to the Exchange and demand to be paid for his labour. The Exchange might refuse to accept such goods, in which case it conferred no benefit, or it might accept them, in which case it achieved its own destruction. The producer furnished with his labour-notes would at once convert them into other articles in store, and the Exchange

would find itself in possession of a large quantity of goods which by hypothesis were totally useless.

Considerable importance was attached to the suppression of middlemen or shopkeepers. These persons, who produce nothing, live by taxing the producer and the consumer; they receive this toll for facilitating distribution. The Exchange only deducted a trifling amount upon each transaction.* It does not, however, appear clear that much material advantage was gained. It must not be forgotten that every consumer was also a producer, and what he gained in one capacity he most probably lost in the other; if (to adopt the profane language of the world) he bought cheaply he must recollect that he sold cheaply. No higgling was permitted in either transaction. It was this that excited the indignation of a tailor. He wrote to the 'Times' to say that, having bought the necessary materials, he had made a suit of clothes, and when he arrived at the Exchange, he first suffered much inconvenience from delay, and then his work was valued at less than the materials had cost him. It was replied with perfect truth that the labour-notes he held in his hand were worth, if expended in the Exchange, quite as much as the usual price in money would be in the world; yet, although there was no loss upon the transaction, it does not appear that there was any gain; on the other hand, however, the moral advantage would be undoubted. In the simplest mercantile transaction there is every encouragement given to dishonesty; the seller has an inducement to magnify without the slight-

* The amount was a halfpenny in the shilling for members, and a penny for non-members.

est regard to veracity the value of the article he has to dispose; the purchaser in the same way takes advantage of the necessity of the seller to effect a hard bargain; thus commerce is converted into a struggle, and the most unscrupulous not unfrequently succeed the best.

The Labour Exchange was opened in Gray's Inn Road in September, 1832, just a month before the meeting of the Co-operative Societies in Liverpool. Better educated persons than any of those who sent goods to the Exchange are occasionally seized with the delusion that they are about to make a fortune; that some obvious means, veiled to the stupidity of their fathers, has just been brought to light. Perhaps there was not a man who contributed a shoe or an ill-made coat to the Exchange who did not fancy that from that moment the tyranny of capital was destroyed, that those who were rich in the wealth of old society were doomed to immediate destruction,—that labour would at length win its long-deferred triumph over capital. Mr. Owen with sincere obliquity encouraged the delusion. The discovery of labour-notes, he said, "was of more importance than that of the mines of Mexico or Peru, for it would in a little time make them all rich and independent." "If the plans he had to recommend were adopted, there need not be a single unemployed person in the kingdom in a few months, and in twelve months there would be universal prosperity from which they never need retrograde."* These words came from a man whose practical experience in business had been long tested, whose

* 'The Crisis,' i. pp. 150, 153.

character was unimpeachable, whose disinterested philanthropy was universally acknowledged,—it is not strange, therefore, that they were believed by those who upon such subjects could have no opinion of their own. The street was so crowded that it became impassable; there were many no doubt who had gone from pure curiosity, but the bright flash that might be discerned in the eye of others betokened the high hopes they experienced. Upon two occasions the Exchange had to be closed, the pressure of business being too great for the staff. The deposits rapidly increased from 20,000 to 40,000 hours weekly. Upwards of 250 shops conducted after the old system accepted the labour-notes as currency; even the playbills of theatres announced that the notes would be received at the door. Notwithstanding the small charge that was made upon each deposit, the clear profit was £20 a week.

A measure so successful in the Metropolis was speedily imitated in Birmingham; capital was raised in shares of £1 each, and a building was constructed. Owen opened it in August, 1833, with great solemnity. In one week 16,000 hour-notes were issued, and the profits amounted to £30. It was intended to open an Exchange in every town in the empire, and at once to place the poor in a position of affluence.

We are informed that a horrible dread took possession of the non-productive classes. Mr. Owen made no attempt to conceal the gravity of their situaation. The aristocracy, he said, would soon be forced to labour with their hands, for the money they worship would be utterly valueless; he recommended the shop-

keepers, whose business would be so soon superseded, to unite at once for the formation of Exchanges, wherefrom they might at least derive sufficient profit to live. The movement had elicited much oratory; the speakers assured the governing classes of their compassion—of the anxiety they felt for their welfare, but they could no longer condescend to support a system which, being based upon false principles, could produce nothing but "vice and crime continually." In view of this sudden calamity it was consolatory to hear Mr. Dale Owen (Mr. Owen's son) assert that it was possible, even late in life, to apply oneself to productive employment. At New Harmony persons who, till then, had been useless members of society, were known to acquire the art of carpentry with great facility; Dale Owen stated that he himself had made a pair of boots in a week, and two of his brothers had achieved a similar feat; a gentleman expressed the thrill of satisfaction he had lately experienced when he had learned the noble art of tailoring, and when he found himself, for the first time in his life, enrolled among the useful classes.

Such were the astonishing results anticipated by the founder of the Rational System from the mere substitution of labour-notes for the ordinary currency of the realm. It is easier, however, to depose a despot than to find a constitutional successor. In this case the novelty possessed all the disadvantages of the old system, with vices in addition that were peculiarly its own; it is only in the event of a glut of some particular article that any difficulty is ever found in disposing of it to advantage, and in this exceptional case we have already seen that the Labour Exchange could

afford no assistance without self-destruction. The difficulty that besets the poorer classes is not to dispose of their productions, but to get the means of producing the articles to dispose. Labour is valueless unless it has something to labour upon, and while the work is being performed life must be sustained; now the Exchanges afforded no facility for overcoming this earliest and most pressing difficulty; till the article was produced no labour-notes could be had; when the article was produced money could be as easily obtained, and it was quite as useful. The truth is the great emancipator, the labour-note, was itself money under a different name. Inasmuch, however, as it possessed no intrinsic value, it was peculiarly dangerous; it represented wealth accumulated in a store in the keeping of men who might prove dishonest, and exposed to the risk of total destruction by fire; it represented moreover goods which, if not speedily exchanged for more enduring commodities, might become entirely worthless. With every fluctuation in the value of the goods in store the value of their representative, the labour-note, also fluctuated; it would be difficult for human ingenuity to devise a currency liable to more serious objections. Mr. Owen must have felt the truth of some of these remarks when it was discovered upon one occasion that 9000 hours of property had been abstracted; he most generously bore this heavy loss himself.*

Although, therefore, no benefit could possibly be derived from this novel experiment, the hopes it excited contributed in no small degree to retard the progress of the co-operative movement. The men whose pro-

* 'The Crisis,' vol. ii. p. 230.

sperity was thus assured abandoned the slow and painful process of accumulating savings, and then trading upon them after the manner of old society; accordingly we hear that at Manchester the co-operators "had cast aside the drudgery of the shop system and had turned their attention to the cultivation of the mind."* It was clear that men whose time was occupied in oratorical displays and in listening to profound metaphysical discussions could have no heart for the prosaic occupations of trading; moreover, Mr. Owen openly expressed his contempt for such paltry measures. In 1836 he happened to pass through Carlisle; he there "found six or seven co-operative societies in different parts of the town doing well as they think, that is, making some profit by joint-stock retail trading." "It is," he adds, "high time to put an end to the notion very prevalent in the public mind that this is the social system which we contemplate, or that it will form any part of the arrangements of the New Moral World."†

Co-operation was now very widely diffused; it was supported by ardent disciples; the United Kingdom had been divided into nine districts, and in each the cause was advocated by a zealous missionary; papers had appeared to disseminate a knowledge of its principles, and record the steps of its progress.‡ Finally

* 'The Crisis,' vol. ii. p. 31.

† 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 26.

‡ Among the papers specially devoted to the cause we hear of the 'Birmingham Co-operative Herald,' 'Weekly Free Press,' the 'Sphynx,' the 'Associate and Co-operative Mirror,' 'British Co-operator,' the 'Commonweal,' 'Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator,' the 'Republican,' the 'Lion,' the 'Gauntlet,' the 'Movement, the 'Investigator.'

it had received a central organization, by means of which isolated efforts acquired an additional strength, and members were protected from prosecution.

Yet the history of co-operation in England properly begins some years later. The movement I have described has principally an antiquarian interest, for, notwithstanding its early promise, it entirely failed; in a few years only four societies remained from among the 700.* This very singular fact has been ascribed to various causes. I think none exercised a more powerful effect than the general inflation produced by the establishment of Labour Exchanges; but besides this there were many others. When the co-operators entered into competition with the retailers they undertook a very perilous task; it was impossible that they could possess either the same skill in purchasing or the same art of selling, neither could they expect that a manager would be distinguished by the zeal of a principal. Indeed, we hear that many of the managers had not even the necessary qualification of honesty; the defective state of the law favoured the criminal, for prosecution was either impossible or very expensive. The advantages the co-operators possessed they ultimately conceded; they were tempted to abandon the ready-money system, and to open credit accounts. This was frequently the cause of severe embarrassment, and to this source the failure of the Brighton Society is ascribed; Lady Noel Byron came to their assistance with £300; but it was of no avail, and the Pioneers of 1828 passed away. There is an interesting account

* These were in Yorkshire. ('Manchester Co-operator,' vol. iv. p. 146.)

on record of the failure at Manchester; it probably affords a faithful picture of many others:—

"We have already," said Mr. Rigby, "made an experiment of the institution of provision stores upon the common joint-stock principle, but they have not been productive of any advantage. In consequence of the overwhelming competition of the capitalists, who are enabled to purchase large stocks at less than their original cost, we were obliged to act upon a very confined plan. In the first place, we were obliged, from want of capital, to establish our stores in small lanes or back streets; and in the second place, we were obliged to confine our sales entirely to cash exchanges. These two circumstances subjected us to very great disadvantages, the former as regards the respectability, and consequently the attraction of our establishment, and the second in some measure defeated the very end of these establishments, viz. the interest of the poor, for if any of our friends were thrown out of employment then we were their friends no longer; there was no credit allowed in the establishment, so that at the very time when they stood most in need of assistance we were compelled to refuse it. You may well imagine that this was done with very great regret and reluctance on cur part, but in doing so we consulted only our own abilities and the general good. At length the clamour arose about the cruelty of this law against credit in our dealings with the members of the Society; we could not resist it, and after consulting together we agreed to allow credit to every member to the full amount of his subscriptions; this, however, proved eventually the dissolution of our Society, and after two years, when

we came to balance our affairs, we found that we had not gained 6*d.*; it was some consolation, however, to think that we lost nothing; it was, as near as possible, a fair balance." *

But, perhaps, the principal cause of the failure was the condition of the workmen themselves. We have seen how little real independence they had as yet acquired, how ready they were to turn to the rich for assistance.† Nor did the movement really originate with them; it was rather forced upon them by the preaching of Mr. Owen and his disciples, and by the efforts of zealous enthusiasts. Perhaps it was necessary that the people should pass through a preliminary stage of violence, of trades-union atrocities, of Chartist riots, of stump oratory, to shake off the spirit of dependence they had inherited from a previous stage of society. But still the efforts of the early co-operators, though now contemptuously disregarded, have not been wholly useless; ‡ the Rochdale weavers might,

* 'The Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 59.

† The value of extraneous assistance, when unaided by the requisite moral qualities, has been since abundantly illustrated in France. Of the numerous co-operative societies established in 1848, with the help of three million francs from the State, only nine now remain. (Simon, 'Le Travail,' p. 335.) It was the same in Germany. "Après février 1848, on avait tenté déjà des essais d'organisation du crédit populaire. Ils reposaient sur le principe de l'assistance par l'État, de la commune, ou de la libéralité individuelle. Eh bien, ces créations ont toutes succombé; pas une n'a survécu." (Seinguerlet, p. 20.) It is remarkable that the experiment at Rochdale began while the weavers were on strike, and in no very prosperous condition. One of the most successful of the old Lyons associations, the Travailleurs-Unis, began under similar disadvantages; it was during a slack season, when most of the workmen were out of employment. (Flotard, p. 131.)

‡ So little is known of the early history of co-operation that the 'Co-operator,' now published in Manchester, was actually in existence for

perhaps, never have laid the foundation of their splendid success had the tradition not come down to them; they began as their predecessors had begun;

two years before it was discovered that it was not the first paper bearing that name. M. Émile Laurent in his great work, 'Le Paupérisme et les Associations de Prévoyance,' remarks that the first co-operative society in England was founded in 1795, and the second in 1835; the third dates, he says, from 1842, and finally Rochdale from 1844 (vol. ii. p. 492, note). In France the first co-operative society of distribution, called 'Caisse du Pain,' appears to have been founded at Guebwiller, in Alsace, in 1832 (Duval, 'Sociétés de Consommation,' p. 13). The Société at Villebois (Ain) has generally been regarded as the second, but it was not for distribution but for production (see Flotard, 'Mouvement Co-opératif,' p. 313). They cannot, however, be said to have acquired any importance before 1848, when the Société de Beauregard stimulated the movement. They were for the most part extinguished again in 1851; they were generally tainted with Socialism, and incurred the displeasure of the Emperor. Recently the law has been modified in their favour, and hopes are entertained that their future progress will not again be interrupted. In Germany the idea appears to have come from England, and to have been introduced by M. Huber (Seinguerlet, 'Les Banques du Peuple,' p. 22). In Italy the movement is quite recent, and due principally to M. Vigano. In France, M. Buchez has the credit of having introduced Sociétés de Production; the first was an association of ribbon-weavers begun in 1831; the 'Bijoutiers en Doré,' founded in 1834, exists to this day (Simon, 'Le Travail,' p. 333). In 1850 M. Schulze-Delitzsch opened his first credit bank at Eulenbourg (Seinguerlet, p. 129); the system reached France in 1856; the first bank was established by M. Barrier at Lyons (Flotard, p. 247); the first in Paris is due to M. Engelman, and dates from 1857 (Simon, *op. cit.* p. 309); the 'Société de Crédit au Travail' dates from 1863 (Laurent, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 515); it has unfortunately failed (Journal des Écon., Jan. 1869, p. 132); the 'Caisse des Associations Co-opératives' was founded in 1866 under Imperial patronage, the Emperor subscribing 500,000 francs ('Manchester Co-operator,' vol. vii. p. 72). This form of co-operation extends from the north of Russia to every part of Europe, and even to Egypt (Seinguerlet, p. 148; Laurent, vol. ii. p. 512, note); it has not made way in England. In America co-operation is principally directed to building houses and clearing gardens (E. Frignet, Hist. de l'Association, p. 378); they are called "Homestead Associations."

the same social renovation which had animated the one was the source of the inspiration of the other. As a writer has justly remarked,* the co-operative movement would never have spread throughout England, had the saving of a few pence been all it had proposed to effect.†

The early co-operative movement had attained its greatest success in 1832. We have already seen that in that year there were 700 societies established throughout the country, of which 40 were in London.‡ But as yet the principle had been limited in its success to mercantile transactions; the socialist scheme at Orbiston had been dissolved; the Exeter community

* Émile Laurent, 'Le Paupérisme,' vol. ii. p. 487.

† Mr. Holyoake ('Co-operation in Rochdale,' p. 10) calls the Rochdale weavers the "communistic, teetotal, political co-operators." The last of these objectionable adjectives to be got rid of appears to have been "teetotal," and notwithstanding the despair it has excited among the advocates of temperance, I am glad to find that the pioneers at Rochdale have recently entered on the malting trade ('Manchester Co-operator,' vol. viii. p. 673). It would be a source of regret if a movement that bears the impress of universality, the commencement of an industrial revolution equal in importance to any that have preceded it, should be limited in its action by the indiscreet zeal of Puritanical Reformers. This misfortune has not been confined to England. In Holland the Credit Associations are prohibited from assisting the retailers of spirits (E. Seinguerlet, 'Les Banques du Peuple,' p. 152). In France some of the Sociétés de Secours Mutuels oblige their members to refrain from entering either a *café* or a public-house (Émile Laurent, 'Le Paupérisme,' vol. ii. p. 14); others impose severe duties upon them, especially visiting the sick. This has been found so onerous that some societies in Bordeaux and Paris pay persons specially for the purpose (Hubbard, 'Sociétés de Prévoyance,' p. 45). The societies established among women visit unchastity with the same severity; a member is excluded if convicted of laxity in this respect (Hubbard, *op. cit.* p. 25).

‡ The 'Co-operator' (Manchester), vol. iv. p. 146; 'Crisis,' vol. i. p. 135.

had hardly existed; in the vicinity of Brighton, indeed, a farm had been cultivated upon the co-operative principle, but it was soon to share in the disaster of the parent society; I know not what befell the establishment near Wigan, with its extensive machinery. But in 1830, Mr. Gurdon, of Assington Hall, in Suffolk, began an agricultural experiment that has achieved remarkable success; for a long time it remained almost unknown, but latterly it has acquired a wide and well-merited celebrity. Mr. Gurdon would probably disclaim any sympathy for Socialism, but perhaps it is not going too far to assert, that if it had not been for the Founder of Socialism the experiment at Assington would never have been made, for it dates from a period when co-operation attracted very general attention, a movement that owed its impetus, if not its origin, to the principles Mr. Owen had advocated.

"Selecting sixty acres of land of medium quality, furnished with a rough but not unsuitable homestead, Mr. Gurdon formed his little company of shareholders, all of them taken from the class of farm labourers, to which he gave the name of the Assington Co-operative Agricultural Society."* The shares were £3 each, and no one is permitted to hold more than one; at first the number of members was fifteen, but it afterwards rose to twenty-one; the quantity of land was also increased from 60 to 120 acres. Mr. Gurdon advanced £400 on loan, without interest, receiving a deposit of £2 from each member, as a personal guarantee. The society agreed to pay a rent of £200 a year, and also the tithes, rates, and taxes; yet it prospered so well that

* Rev. J. Fraser's Report, Agricultural Commission, part i. p. 47.

in ten years it had repaid the loan of £400; besides this, the farm was well stocked, and the shares of £3 had risen in value to £50. The company is managed by a committee of four, two new members being chosen by ballot every year; but the practical direction rests with the bailiff, who receives 1*s.* a week beyond the usual wages; the farm is worked by five men and two or three boys; they need not necessarily be co-operators, but if a co-operator is in want of work he receives the preference. The profits of the concern are divided equally among all the members; if one of them falls into distress, he can have a loan at five per cent. up to half the current value of his share. The farm is intended only for the benefit of the poor of the parish, accordingly no one else is eligible; and if a member goes to reside three miles away, he must dispose of his share; the new member must be approved of by the landlord and pay £5 down; he is charged five per cent. upon the balance due until the whole of the value of his share has been paid. Such has been the success of this experiment, that Mr. Gurdon has since extended it. Two societies now exist, consisting of fifty-five members, who cultivate 336 acres, for which they pay a rent of £525 a year.*

The advantages resulting from this experiment are manifold: the condition of the labourer has been improved; instead of eating dry bread, he can indulge in bacon; not alone this, for a stimulus has been created. and a means afforded for the profitable investment of hard-earned savings. The labourer has acquired an

* Fraser's Report, pp. 47, 48; 'Manchester Co-operator,' vol. iii. pp. 147–8; vol. vi. p. 67–8.

interest in the land and a stake in the country; he is removed from discontent, and can no more be inflamed by agitation; he is taught business habits, and learns to value education; a premium has been set upon honesty and good conduct, for by the terms of agreement the share is forfeited if its holder is convicted of a crime; at his death he leaves a provision for his widow, and an inheritance for his children.* The result is, that the members are picked men, and the farm itself sufficiently proves that such is the case. Mr. Gurdon assures us that no part of his estate is so well cultivated.†

"The only objections of any force that have been taken to it" (writes Mr. Fraser in his admirable report) "were that of Mr. Hedges, that if the system became general it would extinguish the tenant-farmer class; and that of Mr. Maud, that the tenant-farmer class being extinguished, there would be a chasm in our social, and particularly in our parochial system, that would be difficult to bridge over; but these objections, though theoretically forcible, may be practically disregarded."‡ Still the system is not free from objection; the effect it produces corresponds to

* There are five widows who now enjoy the benefit of their husbands' share, and with the assistance of other work they are doing well. ('Co-operator,' vol. vi. p. 67.)

† *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 147.

‡ I cannot appreciate some of the advantages, nor can I be discouraged by some of the disadvantages mentioned by Mr. Maud (see his letter to Mr. Fraser, Agricultural Commission, app. part ii. p. 189); among the former, he includes the tendency the system has to "attach the labourer to his parish." Now the labourer is not likely to quit the parish unless by doing so he can better his condition; his migratory propensities have therefore a tendency to raise wages; I know that high wages are not agreeable to gentlemen farmers, or to the

the allotment system. The fifty-five members, besides receiving the ordinary wages of the country, enjoy a share in the profits of a farm; now this may act in two ways: the fortunate labourer may improve his standard of living, he will thereby increase the comforts of himself and his family, and he will excite the emulation of others to aspire to the same condition; or it is possible to imagine the fifty-five members coming into competition with others who do not possess the same advantages, the associate labourers could accept wages upon which another man would starve, they accordingly receive employment, and the others are compelled to forego the necessaries of life, or to look to the parish for a subvention that will place them upon an equality with their rivals. The truth is, Mr. Gurdon's co-operative farm, while it possesses many advantages peculiarly its own, is liable to most of the objections that attend every scheme for artificially raising wages, whether the assistance comes from the parish, from the allotment system, or from the benevolent exertions of a high-minded gentleman, the result in the end must be the same; unless the standard of living keeps pace with the improvement,

tenants of glebes, but they are decidedly to the advantage of the labourer; and as the class to which he belongs is by far the most numerous, he should claim the first consideration. I am aware that the patriarchal system is the most poetical, but, like most poetry, its ideal is alas! in the past, and can never more be realized in the future. Mr. Maud considers that it would be a great calamity if the farmer class were to be replaced by associations of labourers. He appears to consider that the agricultural community must be necessarily divided into two classes: pauper-labourers on the one hand, and tenant-farmers and proprietors on the other; the special duty of the latter being to pay poor-rates and to subscribe to charities.

the consequence will entail more of disaster than benefit. If a reform is to be effected through co-operative farms, the change cannot end with a compromise, but must amount to a revolution. The ambition of a co-operator must not be limited to the acquisition of a share that will add a mite to his wages; he must aspire to extend his agricultural interests till he can withdraw altogether from the class to which he belonged, till as an associate farmer he is entirely independent of the wages of labour. The chief importance of the experiment at Assington is, that it has established, through the success of a long series of years, that co-operative farming is possible; it remains for a future experiment to give to the measure a more perfect development.*

In the following year (1831) a community was formed on the property of Mr. Vandeleur, in the county of Clare; that gentleman happened to be in Dublin when Mr. Owen delivered his memorable lectures, and he became a zealous convert; he did not at first change the disposition of his property, but at length an incident peculiar to Irish life induced him to do so; his steward had been murdered; he himself had been obliged to quit the country, under the protection of an armed force; the entire country was in possession of lawless factions — Terry-Alts,

* A co-operative farm is said to have existed for upwards of sixty years in Glen Spean, Inverness-shire; sixteen farmers joined in the purchase of 3000 sheep, and rented in common a large tract of mountain land; they each possess one horse and four milch cows, and they unite in the various operations connected with the concern. It has met with remarkable success, and a share when sold ranges in value from £250 to £300. ('Manchester Co-operator,' vol. viii. p. 666.)

White Feet, Black Feet, and others, overrode the feebleness of the law, and reduced society to anarchy. Such were the unfavourable circumstances under which the new experiment was begun. Mr. Vandeleur's confidence in the New Ideas was unbounded; the event fully justified his expectations.

The farm of Ralahine consisted of 622 acres; the members of the community were elected by ballot from among the peasants, subject to Mr. Vandeleur's approval; the government was patriarchal; the proprietor retained the right of summary dismissal, which, however, he never had occasion to exercise; the business of the farm was regulated by a committee elected by ballot; it assembled every evening, and appointed to each man his work for the following day; no inequality existed; the domestic offices usually performed by servants were discharged by all the members who were under seventeen years of age; from that period they were treated as adults, and enjoyed an equal share in the division of the profits.

The members were paid the usual wages of the country, 8*d.* a day to men and 5*d.* to women; the sum thus advanced was repaid to the landlord, who also received £700 a year rent, and £200 a year interest on the working capital, the stock, farm implements, etc.

Besides the division of the profits, the members enjoyed other advantages; a store was established similar to the one at New Lanark, from whence goods were obtained free from retailers' extortion; the community lived at the same table, and considerable economy was thereby effected; much care was bestowed on the education of the children; it is remarkable that

the school was conducted upon purely secular principles; the opinions of the lady who taught in it, probably, diverged as widely from Protestantism as from Catholicism; yet, with one exception, her labours were very highly valued by the parents.

We are not informed how it was intended to convert this purely co-operative farm into a community by the acquisition of a common capital; we are assured, however, that such was the ultimate object;* so far as it went no doubt can be entertained of its success; the people continued to be industrious, they acquired peaceful habits—they clearly perceived the advantages they enjoyed, and they were grateful for them; they had to renounce some habits to which they were long accustomed; neither smoking nor spirituous liquors were permitted on the estate.

The experiment was successfully carried on for three years and a half; it was then terminated by no fault in its organization; Mr. Vandeleur, the proprietor, was unhappily addicted to the exciting pleasures of gambling, and the whole of his property, Ralahine amongst the rest, had to be sold; thus an institution that had triumphed over Celtic violence was finally annihilated by Saxon law.

The future historian of this century may have reason to regard the origin of co-operation with more interest than the Crimean war, or the expedition to Abyssinia; the movement that began in England in the very humble manner I have described has since then spread throughout the whole of Europe, and it promises to afford a solution of one of the most momentous ques-

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 67.

tions of the day; for it is evident that another revolution in labour remains to be achieved equal in magnitude to the emancipation it has already accomplished from slavery and serfdom; the restrictions imposed by guilds, the violence of trade organizations, the various systems of Socialism offer no solution of the problem; they are all alike condemned by the spirit of the age, that refuses to legalize a despotism. Free competition is the life of commerce, as free speech is the life of liberty; it is this that gives such peculiar interest to co-operation, for it imposes no restrictions; it invades no rights; it is based upon self-denial—it prospers by prudence; it cannot exist without intelligence; it is ruined by dishonesty; it will, therefore, extend as knowledge and virtue increase among the people, and when alone they are prepared for prosperity they will find it within their grasp; for the power that is acquired by association can rival the largest fortunes; and as each workman is also a member, he derives the advantage of a union between capital and labour; it is in this direction, through long years to come, that society must tend, before the existing gulf that separates the master from the man can be bridged. We cannot doubt that there is a solution of every difficulty, and a cure for every disease; let us hope that co-operation may assist the triumph of trade over the difficulties that beset it, and help to remove the canker that almost threatens its existence; above all, let us hope that co-operation will contribute to remove the poverty that so heavily oppresses the people, even in the most prosperous countries; and that it will accelerate their progress towards the high destiny that awaits them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY SOCIETY OF RATIONAL RELIGIONISTS.

"Truth, without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man, can alone emancipate the human race from sin and misery."—*Robert Owen.*

We have already seen that Mr. Owen rejected the theological doctrine of the essential depravity of man, and in consequence he shared none of the despair that cannot fail to attach to those who adopt that view. He considered that human nature was equally free from any tendency to evil or to good;* but so far as such a tendency might be held to exist, he maintained that it was upon the side of virtue. Looking upon character, therefore, in its origin, as nearly if not wholly passive, he asserted that the circumstances under which it is formed must determine its nature. In confirmation of this opinion he pointed to the similarity that exists among men of the same nation, and he showed how impossible it would be for a European

* "Each individual is so organized that, when young, he may be trained to acquire injurious habits only, or beneficial habits only, or a mixture of both." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. i. p. 37.)

to adopt the habits of an Asiatic. But in the same country there is abundant evidence in favour of a similar conclusion. The various classes of society have each their characteristics, and upon an accident of birth will therefore chiefly depend the peculiar type the child will eventually assume. From these positions he advanced to two conclusions of much importance: the first was that, as the whole of that curious compound generally called character depends wholly upon external circumstances, it is equally unjust to praise or to blame; that, in fact, the individual is an irresponsible agent. The second was that, upon the same assumption, it is perfectly possible to determine beforehand the exact character each child or generation will receive. Placed in circumstances favourable to the development of a particular disposition, that disposition will be inevitably produced.* From the first of these conclusions some very remarkable consequences followed. It became evident that all religions were false, in so far as they assumed the responsibility of man; that all punishments were unjust, inasmuch as they infer that the agent could have avoided the act for which he is condemned. Hence the retribution of Heaven and of society are equally indefensible. From the second he inferred the paramount duty of governments to take such measures as would place all future generations in the position most favourable to the growth of virtue. Nor did he deem such a task beyond their power. The vast organization that is main-

* "I possess," said Mr. Owen, "the knowledge which, if acted upon, will manufacture characters far superior to any possessed by any individual ever yet born." ('New Moral World,' vol. v. p. 339.)

tained for the repression of crime is wholly useless, and the powers with which it is endowed are of questionable morality; but if the efforts that are now so uselessly squandered in this direction were applied, upon a similar scale, for the formation of a rational character, and for the removal of those circumstances that most predispose to vice, there can be no doubt that society would be eventually relieved from a condition that is not inherent in its essence, but a mere disease proceeding in the main from ignorance. Mr. Owen was accustomed to adduce his own success at New Lanark in proof of what might be effected by a judicious combination of circumstances. It is true that little but confusion resulted from the experiment at New Harmony, but the failure may be amply accounted for by the disorderly elements of which it was composed.

Having explained these fundamental principles, it became necessary to show in what manner the cure could be most readily effected; and the first step to be taken in this direction was to discover the causes that are now actively engaged in producing vice. Now, the most prominent of these are ignorance, poverty, and competition. Ignorance is not merely an evil from the superstitions it tends to foster, but it is also the leading cause of inequality among men. It will, therefore, be a part of the new system to give to all precisely the same education. Not alone this, for in the communities of the future all will be educated together; for so long as inequalities are permitted to exist between child and child, so long will they continue to exist between man and man. But when all the

members of the community have been subjected from infancy to the same influences, and brought up in constant association with one another, the differences of rank, tastes, and habits, that now introduce so much division and discord, will entirely cease. So far as there may be any original difference of temperament between men, it will also be reduced when breeding proceeds upon scientific principles. Now the assimilation of character is the first condition of success; without it, all other attempts that may be made must prove abortive. Accordingly, we find that Mr. Owen discouraged at New Harmony, and upon other occasions, the precipitate zeal of his followers, who were disposed to adopt community-life before they had passed through the preliminary stage of education.

We have already seen the nature of the remedy Mr. Owen proposed for poverty and competition. We have seen how his theory of socialism was in its origin little more than the development of a pauper farm, so as to include every class in society; the elaborate division into ranks, classified according to wealth, and the subdivision of each rank according to religious faith and political opinion, was not to be a permanent feature in the measure. It was intended only as a temporary means of conciliating existing prejudices. The new system of education would, in the course of a single generation, render all such provisions unnecessary, for it would introduce a perfect uniformity both of rank and opinion. Nature has defined the only true inequality that can justly exist; it is the inequality proceeding from age. The "New Moral World" will, therefore, be organized upon that principle. All will,

in the course of their lives, be called upon to perform every function, from the humblest domestic duties to the most difficult operations of government. Life to the age of thirty will be divided into periods of five years each. The two first will be devoted to the formation of character and the useful branches of education. At seven each child will begin to assist in domestic matters, and in such out-door pursuits as may be suited to its strength and advantageous to its health. They will be directed and aided by children from ten to twelve, at which latter age they would cease to be occupied with the domestic duties now confided to servants, and would enter upon the more important labour of life. From twelve to twenty-five every one will be engaged in the production of wealth. It appears hardly possible that all can be occupied successively or simultaneously upon every division of labour; but care will be taken that the occupations shall be sufficiently diversified to secure perfect health and sufficient repose to all. As each community will have no object but to supply a simple abundance to its members, the grinding toil with which we are familiar in old society will have no existence. During the years devoted to the production of wealth there will, therefore, be ample time for practising the most useful form of education, that of instructing others. At twenty-five the citizen of the New Moral World will emerge from the business of life to enjoy its pleasures. His character will have been carefully formed; his youth will have been usefully employed: it cannot be doubted that his remaining years will be spent in a manner agreeable to himself and highly

profitable to mankind. The duties he will have to perform to his community will occupy but a very small portion of his time. Till thirty he will act as guardian of the wealth that has been created. From thirty to forty he will be a member of the Council of Government, and direct the operations of the colony; from forty to sixty he will be employed on such foreign affairs as may arise. He will carry his knowledge and experience to the ends of the earth; he will unite the most distant colonies together by the friendship his presence will excite.*

The reader will perceive how much the complex operations of old society will be simplified. The evil that reigns in great cities will cease, for they will be delivered over to desolation. The population of the New Moral World will be scattered throughout the country in communities, each community including from 500 to 3000 persons. They will all be founded upon agriculture. Machinery and manufactures will be judiciously introduced to lighten the burden of labour and increase the conveniences of life. But each colony will be mainly self-supporting. The great occupation of traffic and exchange will be nearly, if not entirely, suspended. Commercial enterprise that unites the most distant shores will cease, for the evil passions that impart to it its life will no longer exist. † Private property will be abolished; the lust of gain, the envious

* 'Book of the New Moral World,' pt. v.

† So completely did Mr. Owen contemplate the total cessation of commerce and the resolution of society into self-supporting colonies, that he anticipated a time when no medium of exchange would be required. [See 'Book of the New Moral World,' pt. ii. p. 26.] The labour exchanges were only "an intermediate step." *Ibid.* p. 28.

spirit of rivalry, the demon of competition, with the other horrors of old society; its licentious luxury, its long catalogue of miseries, will entirely disappear. Not alone this, for the productive resources of society will be greatly augmented, inasmuch as large classes of useless consumers will be abolished. The priesthood, for example, will vanish with the superstitions they have created. The unhealthy conditions excited by large towns, and the vices of the old immoral world will be so effectually removed that physicians will be no longer required. Hostile feelings will be so completely subdued, through a belief in fatalism, that neither an armed force nor any officers of law will continue to exist; besides this, the numerous class of middlemen, shopkeepers, and others, who are engaged in distributing wealth, will be entirely superseded by the new organization of self-supporting colonies. Thus, the whole force of society will be directed exclusively to productive labour.

While Mr. Owen proposed to effect these startling changes in the present organization of society, he maintained also that it was necessary to carry reform into the domestic relations. The communistic life he contemplated would effectually destroy the selfish privacy of families. The men of the New Moral World would live in public; their food would be eaten at public tables; separate houses would be replaced by huge dormitories. For individuals and families private property would have no existence; each person would become a part of a colony; all would share alike in the common wealth the fruit of the common labour. As women would enjoy precisely the same rights as men,

their position would be, of course, completely independent. Children would belong more properly to the community than to their parents. The vast increase of productive power, from the entire abolition of useless professions and destructive luxury, would so augment the riches of the world, that no prudential considerations would be necessary to restrain the production of children. The community would, indeed, exercise a supervision over the union of the sexes, so as to prohibit the reproduction of disease,* or the multiplication of an inferior race. With this exception, every encouragement would be given to early marriage, as the only safeguard to morality; and a celibate life would be viewed as "a great crime, necessarily leading to disease of body and mind, and to unnatural thoughts, feelings, and conduct."† Mr. Owen strenuously denounced the monstrous doctrine of a community of wives; at the same time he thought that considerable allowance should be made for the mutability of the affections. He ridiculed the vows that are imposed in old society, and which are wholly powerless to prevent the heart from growing cold, and the warmest love from being transformed into bitter hate. He maintained that the existing theories respecting chastity and marriage are due to ecclesiastical

* 'New Moral World,' vol. ii. p. 42. On the principle "no inferior article will be produced," persons of bad health "will not be allowed to propagate their natural defects and miseries, in order that hereditary evils may speedily cease to retard the happiness of the human race."

† 'Lectures on Marriage,' p. 10; 'Book of the New Moral World,' pt. i. p. 44. "Celibacy is a virtue of the priesthood of the world, but it is a vice against nature; and I ask, shall nature or the priesthood prevail?" ('Lectures on Marriage,' p. 12.)

influence, and should be completely revolutionized. He denied that chastity could ever be in itself a virtue; on the contrary, after the period indicated by nature, it became, in his estimation, an "unnatural crime." He contended that human nature is composed of intellectual, moral, and sensual qualities, and that it is necessary to happiness that they should be all developed, and a proper balance introduced among them. He did not regard any one of the elements of our nature as in itself inferior to the rest; he considered that they are all of equal dignity, and contribute in a like degree to the attainment of the object of life, which, in his opinion, is happiness.* He asserted that a union between the sexes can never be condemned by morality unless unhallowed by love.† Marriage he denounced as "a spurious chastity," "a Satanic device of the priesthood," for it is the source of a double prostitution: to it must be ascribed the indissoluble union of

* "The highest virtue is that which produces the greatest happiness that human nature can experience." "All parts of his nature are equally necessary to his happiness; his physical propensities require to be as regularly exercised as his intellectual faculties, and these again as his moral feelings; and as the health of each part is essential to maintain the health of all the other parts, no one portion of human nature can be inferior to another, because, although composed of many parts, it is one individual whole, and perfect only in proportion as all its parts approach perfection." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. i. p. 55.) "It is the insane conduct of man supposing it right and virtuous to oppose his own nature, and wrong and vicious to act in accordance with it, that now creates most, if not all, of the diseases, vices, crimes, and miseries of the human race." (*Ibid.* pt. iii. p. 26.)

† It then became, in his opinion, unchaste, and consequently "now all married pairs, with a very few exceptions, are living in a state of the most degrading prostitution, enforced upon them by the human laws of marriage." ('Lectures on Marriage,' 1841, p. 49.)

persons whose sympathies are alienated, and whose existences are thus embittered; to it must also be ascribed the vice that reigns in society, diffusing among a large class the most atrocious forms of misery. It is time that we should be relieved from a prostitution that corrupts the affections as much as it degrades the body. Accordingly, in the New Moral World a union will be entered into with due formality, but without the penalty of being irrevocable. When a marriage has lasted twelve months, if both parties agree to separate, they will be permitted to do so in six months after they have given notice of their intention; if, however, only one party entertains such a wish, then the separation will be delayed for twelve months longer, and then, upon another application, the marriage will be dissolved.*

I have thus sought to give a complete account of the social doctrines taught by Mr. Owen, in order that the reader may clearly understand the nature of the movement I have now to describe.

The failure of New Harmony had not in any way discouraged Mr. Owen, or decreased his confidence in the new views. When he returned to England, he lost no time in beginning a course of teaching explanatory of the new system. At first he availed himself of the Mechanics' Institution, Southampton Buildings, but a vote of some of the members compelled him to desist. He retreated to the Sans Souci Institution, in Leicester Square, and subsequently bought a chapel of his own in Burton Street, Burton Crescent. In a short time he was enabled to get possession of a large

* 'Lectures on Marriage,' p. 89.

building in Gray's Inn Road, where he opened the Labour Exchange. He called it the Institution of the Industrious Classes, and no pains were spared to render it attractive. To the poor it offered a refuge from their poverty, by loosening for ever "the iron grasp of capital;" to those whose weary lives had never tasted happiness it presented a tardy means of realizing the object of existence; and, if there were any who loved knowledge rather than peace, there were professors of the sciences and lecturers of philosophy ever ready to raise more questions than they could answer. In one part of the building Mr. Owen would describe his success at New Lanark, and explain the cause of his failure at New Harmony. In another, a clergyman might be heard discoursing on philosophy, and exposing the errors of religion. At one time delegates from the co-operative societies assembled from every part of the kingdom, to report the progress of a movement they little understood; and in the midst of so much that was fraught with permanent importance to mankind, there were others who found in the amusement of the hour a source of pleasure more suited to their intelligence. Asceticism was no part of the Rational Religion, and neither its founders nor its disciples were opposed to dancing. It was the custom, therefore, in the evening, to hold a social festival, where the working man and his family might enjoy the luxury of a ball, without, as in old society, being forced into the presence of vice.

Nor were those upon whom the new light had shone indifferent to the fate of others who were still in darkness,—a Missionary Society was organized, and six

apostles went forth to preach in the open air wherever an audience could be collected. Their principal stations, however, were Primrose Hill, Copenhagen Fields, and White Conduit House. They distributed large quantities of tracts gratuitously, and sometimes sold in one day as many as sixteen dozen copies of the 'Crisis.'* Yet their success was not at first triumphant. The new views spread slowly, and the brilliant hopes excited by the Labour Exchange were not long unclouded. It was soon beset by the embarrassments that shortly afterwards terminated its existence. We have already seen the economic reasons that made it a matter of impossibility for it to accomplish the object it proposed. But its management was attended with the greatest difficulty, and frequently gave rise to the most unpleasing incidents. The valuators rarely satisfied the producers, and the latter were sometimes obliged to convert their notes into money, in order to procure articles that were not to be found in the Exchange. In consequence of a quarrrel with the proprietor, the Institution had to be removed, and much valuable property was stolen during the process. For a time the profits derived from the commission fully paid the whole outlay upon rent and clerks;† but as the novelty wore away, the receipts diminished, until at length the business was threatened with bankruptcy. Strenuous efforts were made to rescue it from the ruin that impended; and the energy with which various schemes were discussed, gave rise to personal recriminations, which the philosophy of circumstances did not

* 'New Moral World,' vol. ii. p. 342.

† For a time the *net* profit amounted to £100 a month.

always appease. At last the evil day arrived, and the undertaking perished that was to have effected a universal revolution,—that had been declared to be "The handwriting on the wall, the balance that would weigh the unproductive classes and find them wanting, a standard on which is written in burning letters the words of Paul, 'unless ye work, neither shall ye eat.'"

Mr. Owen endeavoured for a time to carry out the same system on a much humbler scale in rooms he had taken for the purpose in Charlotte Street, and he continued to preach the new gospel with untiring zeal in Burton Street Chapel. He gathered round him a body of men, mostly in humble positions, but not on that account less enthusiastic disciples. Many schemes were propounded, and innumerable societies formed for the purpose of removing the poverty by which they were oppressed.

The experience they had derived from the Labour Exchange convinced them that under whatever name it might be called, capital was essential to production. A bank was accordingly established to lend money to industrious workmen who could provide security. The capital was declared to be "unlimited." It was raised in shares of 5*s.*, upon which an interest of 4 per cent. was to be paid. The bank charged the fixed rate of 5 per cent. upon its loans. A similar experiment was tried in the Potteries. The Labour Bank, as it was called, besides a capital derived from £1 shares, had the advantage of receiving every week the wages of the shareholders, for which it issued notes. A co-operative store, or trading society, was formed in connection with the bank, where the notes were received in exchange

for goods.* But these banks can lay no claim to have discovered the principle of association among borrowers from which such remarkable results have been achieved in Germany.

The great importance Owen attached to the formation of character had given a very considerable impulse to education among his followers. It was said that wherever a co-operative society was established, a school was immediately opened;† yet their efforts were not always successful. A delegate from Manchester declared that wealth was more easily attained than knowledge, and he attributed the failure of many societies to the disorganization proceeding from the ignorance of the members.‡

In London, a body who called themselves "Social Reformers," met in the evenings in a coffee-house for "mutual instruction, and the cultivation of the moral feelings;"§ and in a little while a school was opened in connection with the Institution in Charlotte Street. It was not without some liberal support. One gentleman sent a donation of £500, and offered to add a further sum of £1000 or £2000, if the money was judiciously employed.‖

But nothing short of radical changes and excessively big words would satisfy Mr. Owen. Accordingly, in May 1833, he once more undertook to denounce all the existing institutions of society, and to explain the exact nature of the millennium of which he was the precursor. This time he called his achievement "The Magna

* 'Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 122. † 'Proceedings of Third Congress.'
‡ 'Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 58. § *Ibid.* p. 27.
‖ 'New Moral World,' vol. i. p. 180.

Charta of Social Regeneration."* The establishment of the "Regeneration Society" was the result; and it undertook to extend its ramifications to the Continent. A union was therefore effected with a "Society for Universal Civilization," which, it appears, existed in the Rue Jacob, Paris. But the interest that attaches to the "Regeneration Society" arises from the connection it established for a time between Socialism and Trades Unions. The principles of Socialism can never attract more than a limited number of adherents; but the objects proposed by Trades Unions must command nearly universal sympathy. We may indeed dispute the wisdom of the means they adopt; but no one can deny that high wages are not in themselves a good. The object of the "Regeneration Society" was not, however, circumscribed within such narrow limits; it sought to establish a union not between the men alone, but also between the three classes of employed, employers, and consumers. In defiance of the natural law that determines the relation of these classes, it proposed to introduce an artificial system of regulation. The consumer was to receive "a fair article, at a fair price;" the employer was to be satisfied with 10 per cent. profit; the hours of labour were to be limited to eight, while at the same time, the most ample remuneration would be given.† The Union Society at Sheffield replied to this programme in what the 'Times' called "one of the most important documents that have been given to the public for many years." It exposes the fallacy of imposing restrictions

* 'Crisis,' vol. ii. p. 144. † *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 156.

upon labour, and concludes by assuring Mr. Owen that he "will have no followers among the thinkers of any class."* Although the disputants interchanged some declamatory language, they had too many sympathies in common to be entirely separated. It was thus that Socialists and Unionists might be heard from the same platform, advocating their respective principles.† At Salford, the Co-operative Society opened a subscription to support a strike.‡ In London, Mr. Owen was elected the grand master of a Lodge, and he permitted the trades to use his lecture hall.§ The 'Crisis' added to its title that of "National Co-operative Trades Union, and Equitable Exchange Gazette." The editor, referring to the formidable organization, said to include a million operatives, ‖ warned "the lords and lordly commoners to set their house in order and wind up their affairs."** Mr. Owen specially charged himself to effect the release of the Dorchester convicts; but the demonstration that took place upon the occasion is said to have exercised an unfortunate influence by increasing the severity of the Government.††

It was natural that the zeal of the Reformers should give rise to much rhetoric. Their speeches were either exceedingly violent or very dull, and as Mr. Owen usually occupied the chair, his patience became so sorely taxed that he was induced to exclude speechifying from his picture of the millennium.‡‡ No subject escaped their violence; religion, however, was, perhaps,

* 'Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 187. † *Ibid.* p. 58. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 191.
§ 'New Moral World,' vol. i. p. 403. ‖ 'Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 198.
** *Ibid.* p. 214. †† *Ibid.* p. 253.
‡‡ 'Book of the New Moral World' pt. vi. p. 70.

the favourite theme. It is needless to say that it was totally annihilated; at least, once every evening. It could not, of course, be expected that the ardour of the social reformers altogether escaped a political bias. A Mr. Savage declaimed against the classes who "misrule and misgovern," and argued, from the prevalence of distress, that the Government was incompetent to its task. Mr. Owen urged the necessity for a "Charter of the Rights of Humanity," by which he proposed to raise the whole revenue by a graduated property tax; to abolish the Church Establishment, to organize a system of national employment and universal education, —to establish free trade and liberty of speech. Besides these measures, he proposed that war should cease, and international differences be arranged exclusively by a congress, and that a union be still further cemented between foreign countries by the adoption of a common language.* Upon another occasion, he demanded that a place should be conceded to the people in the third estate of the realm, otherwise, he threatened that they should create a fourth estate for themselves.† He spoke with compassion of the "poor sovereigns, who are generally the victims of their unnatural stations," and who are thereby reduced to a deplorable condition, being "idiotic, foolish, insane, or mad, or some compound of these qualities." But the aristocracy he denounced as "the enemies of the human race;" for "they first rob the people of all their rightful inheritance," and continue to retain possession of the land, "although, in strict justice, it belongs in per-

* 'Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 219. † p. 253.

petuity to the people."* But, energetic as this language may appear to the ordinary reader, it is tame in comparison to the indignant fury with which he alludes to priests and soldiers, persons who "mystify and dignify ignorance, plunder and murder." He permitted Feargus O'Connor to hold a radical meeting in the Social Institution, and the editor of the 'New Moral World' declares that the ballot, annual parliaments, and universal suffrage, "are so natural and just, and so reasonable, that their non-existence serves to prove how unnatural, unjust, and unreasonable is the condition in which the great mass of the population of this country is still held by the dominant power in the State."† And yet, notwithstanding the frank avowal of such opinions, neither Mr. Owen nor his followers were political agitators. Their object was so completely to revolutionize the whole constitution of society, that a mere reform of existing institutions appeared to them of trifling importance. Accordingly, when the people under other leaders rose to claim their charter of rights, and to menace the Government, the Socialists stood aloof from the movement, with some expression of contempt for such paltry agitation. They had, indeed, by that time, assumed the worst form of an ecclesiastical organization; and, as is customary in such cases, they were so intent upon denouncing "the old immoral world," that they could have no sympathy for the various questions by which it was agitated. This new phase of Socialism properly dates from May, 1835. "The Association of all Classes of all Nations,"‡ which

* 'New Moral World,' vol. ii. p. 11. † *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 396.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 217.

was then formed, was by no means so comprehensive as its name indicates. Each candidate had to pass through a severe probation before he was admitted to the privilege of membership. He had in the first place to attend weekly lectures at the Institution for three months, and then to pass an examination in the principles of Mr. Owen's, or, as it was called, the rational system; he had to declare his belief in the doctrines of the new faith; he had to protest his readiness to sacrifice his personal ambition to the furtherance of the great cause, and, if required, to enter into community at the bidding of his master. He had then to be elected by ballot into the lowest class of membership. The society was divided into three classes, and before the member was admitted into the highest, he had to pass at each step through a probation of six months and an election by ballot. He then enjoyed the privilege of being called a brother. Every year there was a "ballot of continuance." The government of the society was entirely patriarchal.* Mr. Owen, who, of course, was at the head, received the title of "Our Social Father." †

One of the objects of this society was to collect subscriptions from the members for the purpose of paying missionaries to traverse the country in all directions, to diffuse a knowledge of the Social System. It was also intended to try an experiment upon land, and with this view a Community Fund was formed, and supported by subscriptions of 3*d.* a week. Mr. Owen

* It was defined as "paternal and one of unity, to be administered in the spirit of kindness under the guidance of reason." ('New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 352.)

† *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 145; vol. ii. p. 251.

had calculated that £250,000 was the lowest amount upon which an experiment could be attempted. It was necessary, therefore, to find the means of increasing the revenue of the society, and recourse was had to the old co-operative principle. A store was accordingly opened for the sale of tea and groceries, in John Street, Tottenham Court Road. It is stated that, of the numerous societies that had sprung up in London a few years before, not one now remained; still, the new store flourished for a time, and was subsequently enrolled under the Friendly Societies Act. Notwithstanding the care that was taken in the selection of members, and the zeal with which they were animated, the cause made for a time but little progress. A congress was held once every year, to afford the leading members an opportunity for deliberating upon the affairs of the society. At the first, but one delegate came from the country; he was sent from Manchester, where the new views had already obtained many converts.* When, however, the second congress assembled, in May, 1837, it was found that the principal manufacturing towns were represented. Amongst others, we hear of delegates from Liverpool, Manchester, Bolton, Salford, Halifax, and Huddersfield; letters were also read from friends at Birmingham, Bristol, New York, and many other places.† Thus the Charlotte Street Institution rapidly became the centre of a vast organization, governed by a Central Board, and extending throughout every part of the kingdom. Its missionaries received salaries of from £80 to £100.‡ They were men of

* 'New Moral World,' vol. viii. p. 2. † *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 347.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1007.

humble origin and not very refined education, but their zeal was unbounded. Mr. Alexander Campbell was one of the most enterprising; he had begun life as a joiner and house-carpenter;* he became subsequently an active member of the Orbiston community, and contributed to found one of the earliest co-operative societies in Scotland. William Hunter, a moulder in an iron foundry, and afterwards a rush-merchant and furniture-broker, was remarkable for the energy of his preaching; his death, accelerated by his exertions, was regretted as a severe calamity to the cause.† But Mr. Owen himself, although approaching seventy years of age, was perhaps the most indefatigable of all. We hear of his rising at three in the morning, travelling the whole day, and lecturing in the evening.‡ He was known to be satisfied with five hours' sleep in two days, and he would make a journey of sixty miles before breakfast; he would lecture every day in the week, and twice on Sunday. His labours were not even limited to his own country; he started upon a missionary expedition abroad. His object was to ascertain from the "authorities of Europe," "whether they deem the time ripe to give their sanction to and lead a moral revolution, which all the powers on earth cannot now prevent, nor much retard."§ With that view, he travelled two successive days and a night to Metz; he visited the King of Bavaria at Munich; he discussed the new views with Prince Metternich, at Vienna;|| he had an interview with Baron Humboldt

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 289. † *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 390.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 233; vol. vii. p. 1001. § *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 387.
|| *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 14.

at Berlin.* But, besides all this, it was he who organized and directed the whole movement in England; it was his writings that mainly filled the pages of the Socialist organ, the 'New Moral World;' it was his ready pen that supplied the new religionists with Bible, Creed, Articles, Catechism, and all the usual paraphernalia of dogmatic systems. The result of all these exertions was the formation of a new sect, quite as much religious as socialist, consisting of about 100,000 members.† Wherever sufficient converts were made, a separate society was formed; it received a charter from the parent or London society, for which a fee of 10*s*. was charged. It was then at liberty to carry on its own government, and to conduct the propaganda within its own district.‡ The congress of 1838 found the number of the district societies had increased from three to thirty-two; and in the following year they rose to fifty-eight, and embraced nearly all the principal towns of the United Kingdom.§

The leaders of the movement in each of these places appeared for a time at least to forget that they were social reformers, and not theologians. Mr. Owen had declared so frequently and with such vehemence that all established beliefs were irreconcilably antagonistic to the new views, that his followers considered it essential to their success to begin by a furious assault upon religion. They sought, however, to establish a faith more in accordance with reason, in the place of the old theologies they had destroyed. It was essential, therefore, that they should have a building where

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iv. p. 62.
† *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 214.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1075.
§ *Ibid.* vol. viii. p. 2.

they might deliver their lectures, and conduct the service of their church. At first they were exposed to much persecution, and it was with difficulty that they could get a room or a hall for the purpose. But as their resources increased, they were in some degree removed from this cause of annoyance.

At Rochdale the cause was early strengthened by the accession of a clerical convert, the Rev. Joseph Mariott. In 1838 a Social Institution was opened in Yorkshire Street.* But the first Social Hall, exclusively appropriated to the Society, was erected at Sheffield, in 1839.† At Salford, a Mr. Smith, a wealthy convert, built a hall at a cost of £850, capable of holding 600 people.‡ At Manchester the Institution cost £6000. The lecture room alone afforded accommodation for 2000 people. At Liverpool the hall cost £5000; in London, £3000; and at Birmingham, a chapel was bought for £800.§ In this manner no less than £22,000 was spent in one year alone;|| and in those buildings there assembled every Sunday for many years, a congregation of men and women, who had passed through all the fever of religious controversy, who had strength to stand up against the creed of their fathers, to separate themselves from the friends they loved, to break through the cherished associations that cling so fondly around the memory of the past. Never, perhaps, was a religious leader so little fitted to guide such a movement as Mr. Owen. His theology was limited to

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 348; vol. iv. p. 196.
† *Ibid.* vol. viii. p. 2.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 273.
§ 'Sixth Congress,' vol. ix.
|| 'Congress,' vol. viii. p. 2.

the doctrine of Fatalism, and the assertion as a consequence of human irresponsibility. His conception of virtue reduced itself to the practice of benevolence; his religion to a passive contemplation of an incomprehensible power. Such a creed is not incompatible with a noble life; but it is little likely to inspire one. Fatalism is by far too convenient a doctrine for the masses of men, who are rarely indisposed to escape from the reproof of conscience. The practice of benevolence, no doubt, exercises an admirable subjective influence, but it frequently entails the most disastrous consequences on its victims. Some degree of infamy is even yet supposed to attach to Atheism. The opponents of Socialism accused Mr. Owen's disciples of holding that doctrine, a charge they indignantly repudiated. Yet it would be difficult to imagine a creed that approached more closely to it. The denial of the existence of some Power in the Universe seems scarcely compatible with the present state of knowledge. The validity of a charge of Atheism must depend rather on the attributes we ascribe to that Power. Mr. Owen denied its personality, and was satisfied to assert that it was incomprehensible.* At the same time he deprecated every effort of the creature to approach the Creator in the language of prayer. He never seems to have imagined it possible that the Power of which he spoke may be endowed with an intelligence with which it is the highest aspiration of our heart to enter into com-

* "I believe that all facts prove that there is an external or internal cause for all existence, but that man has not yet acquired a knowledge of any facts to ascertain what that cause is, or any of its special qualities." ('New Moral World,' vol. vi. p. 659.)

munion, and with attributes that can excite in our mind any other feelings than those of admiration and wonder.* Such opinions as these are shared by very many, who are fully entitled to respect, and whose lives are an eloquent refutation of the calumnies so profusely heaped upon them. But we can scarcely view with complacency an attempt to diffuse so barren a creed among men who still require to be sustained in the path of virtue by the positive sanctions of a dogmatic system.†

* "There is no practical advantage to be derived from the supposition that the Power of the Universe is an organized Being, or that it should be personified in any manner whatever." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. i. p. 49.)

"The all-pervading Power of the Universe will be silently contemplated and admired." ('New Moral World,' vol. ii p. 41.)

"Man being ignorant of this Power, cannot by forms, ceremonies, or words, do this Power any good or harm, and it is only while he remains in a most ignorant and grossly irrational state of mind and feeling that he can attempt in any manner to address it, in the language of gross inconsistency, not to say insanity." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. iii. p. 31.)

"I believe that all ceremonial worship of a Cause whose qualities are yet unknown, proceeds from ignorance, and that the practice is of no utility whatever, and that it is impossible for men to be formed into rational beings, until all such worship shall cease." ('New Moral World,' vol. vi. p. 659.)

† "That the practice of the Rational Religion will, therefore, consist in promoting to the utmost of our power the well-being and happiness of every man, woman, and child, without regard to their sect, party, country, or colour; and its worship in those inexpressible feelings of wonder, admiration, and delight, which when man is surrounded by superior circumstances only, will naturally arise from the contemplation of the Infinity of Space, of the Eternity of Duration, of the Order of the Universe, and of that Incomprehensible Power by which the atom is moved, and the aggregate of Nature is governed." ('Lecturfes on Marriage,' p. 12.)

Yet such was the unfortunate creed that flourished for a time, under the name of the Rational Religion, and that sought its converts from among the classes who were most likely to suffer from its adoption. It is not to be supposed that a sect of unimpassioned philosophers could suddenly spring up from the most ignorant classes of society; and the writings of Mr. Owen were little calculated to foster moderation. In defiance of his own principles, he persisted in attributing the worst motives to large bodies of men; the religions of the world he unhesitatingly ascribed to deliberate fraud, and their maintenance to calculations of self-interest. His language exhibited the very worst features produced by religious controversy. It was intemperate, exaggerated, and dogmatic.* It is not surprising that his followers caught a spirit so suited to their intelligence. Their organ, the 'New Moral World,' never lost an opportunity of outraging the feelings of Christians. Upon one occasion it had to explain that some intemperate language it had used was

* He speaks of marriage as a "Satanic device of the clergy to place and keep mankind within their slavish superstitions." It was they also who introduced the "impious notion" that they knew better than nature how to regulate the instincts of man, "and by this impiety they introduced sin and misery among the human race." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. iii. p. 26.) It is no wonder, therefore, that they are "horribly injurious to the human race, and utterly destructive to human happiness." (*Ibid.* p. 56.) "Marriage," he remarked upon one occasion, "is the source of more demoralization, crime, and misery, than any other single cause, with the exception of religion and private property." ('Lectures on Marriage,' p. 54.) He speaks of the "ignorance and hypocrisy of all religions." ('New Moral World,' vol. i. p. 50.) He says, "They will ever be engines of power to make men fools and hypocrites, and will remain the bane and curse of humanity." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. iv. p. 6.)

applied only "to a localized animal god, worshipped by a host of localized lunatics."* It associated the name of Mr. Owen and that of the Founder of Christianity in a highly offensive manner;† and a controversy arose as to whether the Bible or the 'Book of the New Moral World' was the most valuable publication.‡ Its pages present a lamentable proof of the evil consequences that ensue from introducing theological discussion among ignorant and passionate men. And yet it was temperate in comparison to the language that some of the missionaries thought proper to employ. One, whose name it is charitable to omit, took a Bible in his hand and expressed his ability to "prove from that book that God was a fool and a liar." The same person denounced the priesthood, "who frightened them to death by their bugaboos, and then made them pay tithes and church rates to save them from the devil."‖ They could find nothing better to say of the great religions of the past than that they were conspiracies invented by designing men to enslave the people. Impatient of control, and disdaining to be guided, they endeavoured to assert their independence by stupidly reviling their former creed, and by wounding the feelings of those whose communion they had abandoned. At their meetings there was generally a stall for the sale of books. It may be easily imagined the description of works that found the most favour with the new enthusiasts. The 'Ruins' of Volney, the 'Theology' of Tom Paine (whom with reference to his

* 'New Moral World,' vol. vi. p. 658. † *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1125.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 538. ‖ Speech of the Bishop of Exeter.

fame they designated the immortal), the 'Cain' of Byron, the 'Queen Mab' of Shelley.* "Canting Saints," "miscreants" and "deluded wretches," were among the epithets they applied to the noblest body of men in the world, while the doctrines that are held in honour by nearly the whole of Europe and its colonies were designated "monstrous absurdities called saving faith."†

It was said that these opinions were followed by a serious relaxation of morals,—so far as such charges were made by ecclesiastics, or by other persons who are more eager to refute than careful not to misrepresent, we may pretty confidently assume that they were pious fabrications; and yet it seemed as though some of the disciples proposed unduly to test the practical application of the doctrine of Fatalism. Accordingly we find it stated that one man was compelled by an irresistible fate to pitch his wife out of the window; another, from the same cause, murdered the fruit of an incestuous intercourse with his sister. The assassin of Lord Norbury was treated with much sympathy as the victim of uncontrollable circumstances.

* Although Shelley justly occupies a foremost place among the poets of the century, it unfortunately happens that there are passages in 'Queen Mab' and others of his poems that give expressions to the peculiar opinions of persons who are quite unable to appreciate the real beauties of the great poet. There can be little doubt that it was for this reason that he enjoyed so much popularity among the Socialists.

† 'New Moral World,' vol. iv. p. 239. If any of my readers should be unhappily inclined to freethought, I would most earnestly recommend them a course of Socialist reading. The twelve large volumes of the 'New Moral World' may be sufficient for an ordinary case. The disease must be very deep if the cure is not speedy and radical.

His punishment was vehemently denounced as a gross injustice, assuming as it did, that the unhappy murderer could have avoided the act for which he suffered. One lecturer contended that if "a man was detected in the very act of theft, he ought not to be treated as a thief, because he could not help it."

Mr. Owen had to restrain the eagerness evinced by some of his disciples to adopt the new law of marriage; he decreed that the freedom of divorce could only be enjoyed in new society, when the character had undergone a more rational formation. But the most melancholy incident that was adduced to illustrate the tendency of the new views is one that unhappily rests upon indisputable evidence. A poor boy at Wolverhampton, who was remarkable for his intelligence and for the excellent character he had always borne, became a convert to the doctrine of the mortality of the soul. Death, when deprived of its terrors, acquired for him an irresistible charm; he saw in it a refuge from the drudgery of a long apprenticeship, and a life of unceasing toil. Happiness, he had learned, was the object of existence: wherefore should he, who could never realize the object, be forced to support the burden? Virtue, he was assured, was nothing more than a name given to the line of conduct that tends to produce the greatest happiness to the greatest number. He coldly balanced the pain he would inflict upon his relations with the relief he would afford himself; he calculated that the transient grief of the mourners was little in comparison with the prolonged misery of his own life.* Virtue was therefore upon his side, as was

* "You will perhaps," he wrote to his uncle, "reproach me for not

also reason; and thus, having calmly reviewed the consequences of his act, he took prussic acid, and went to seek in the grave the only escape he could hope from poverty and sorrow.

At length Mr. Owen began to feel that the extravagance of his followers proceeded too far; he expressed regret that his zeal for the truth had obliged him to denounce error with such persistent violence.* The Central Board of the Association reprimanded some missionaries, who had deviated from the rule of charity;† "enough," it was said, "has now been done in opposition to all localized religions of mystery." Owen, accordingly, exhorted his disciples to feel "pity and compassion" for those who are "entangled within any of these mental delusions;"‡ but "to forbear all future public contests . . . that tend only to arouse angry feelings, and to direct the public mind into wrong channels." If, therefore, they should be challenged to discussion, they are directed to "decline it, by stating that the authority by which you are appointed, and under which you act, will not permit you to occupy your time in discussions which arouse angry irrational feelings."§ They were directed, therefore, to limit their exertions to the simple announcement of the new gospel, and to the ministrations of the new religion. The 'Book of the New Moral World,' in which Mr. Owen had fully explained the new system, was adopted as a sacred writing, and read in the

thinking of your sufferings; but I have weighed them against my own, and have struck the balance in my favour."

* 'Home Colonies,' p. 19.

† Congress, 1840.

‡ 'New Moral World,' vol. v. p. 441.

§ *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 594.

services of the church. The new religionists were also provided with creed,* catechism,† articles, and hymns, and the eloquence of their lecturers supplied the homilies as occasion required. The service was modelled after the old system, and conducted with proper solemnity. It generally began with a hymn to—

> "The great, the unknown Cause,
> Unchangeable as fate;"‡

or to—

> "Eldest of things, divine Equality;"§

or perhaps to Temperance,—

> "Thou great preservative of health."‖

Occasionally they sang—

> "'Tis Reason's sacred lamp alone
> Can guide us in the way
> Where Happiness, o'er ev'ry scene,
> Sheds her reviving ray;"**

or they addressed Reason thus—

> "Rise, sun that lights the mental world,
> And drive night-visions hence;
> Dispel the clouds of error's gloom
> With beams of common sense."††

Familiar sounds were reproduced with new words—

> "Community! the joyful sound,
> What pleasure to our ears!
> A healing balm for every wound,
> A rescue for our fears."‡‡

They exhorted the spectator to—

* 'New Moral World,' vol. vi. p. 659. † *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 73.
‡ 'Social Hymns,' no. 124. § *Ibid.* no. 62. ‖ *Ibid.* no. 111.
** *Ibid.* no. 116. †† *Ibid.* no. 109. ‡‡ *Ibid.* no. 90.

"Leave, O leave your wretched state,—
Scene of discord, scene of hate;
Take the brother's hand we give;
Come, and in communion live."*

The lecturer then proceeded to read from some of Mr. Owen's writings, preference being given to the 'Book of the New Moral World;' and afterwards he expounded the principles of the new system in all its various ramifications, religious, philosophical, and social; and at the conclusion of this solemn service, the disciples would bring their children to be received into the new communion.† It was not, indeed, necessary that they should undergo any mystic washing of water, symbolic of a creed that had passed away; but in the congregations of the "New Moral World" they publicly received the name by which they were to be known among men.

We read that one of the disciples was for a time involved in deep perplexity, for a child had been confided to his care, and it was necessary that he should give it a name.‡ In vain he devoted long days and sleepless nights to study the biography of the mighty dead; in all the long records of the past he could discover not a single man whose life had not been disgraced by tyranny, or whose mind had not been obscured by superstition. At length Julian Hibbert, a disciple of Mr. Owen, passed away, and then, for the first time since the world began, a name had been left upon earth by which the generations that are

* 'Social Hymns,' no. 65.

† 'Crisis,' vol. ii. p. 211; vol. iii. pp. 43, 215; 'New Moral World,' vol. v. p. 93.

‡ 'Crisis,' vol. iii. p. 215.

to follow might be called; for, after a life passed in the practice of the rational system, he had sunk into the silence of an eternal rest, where he feared no evil dreams, and looked for no resurrection of the world to come.

Theological eccentricity meets with very little toleration from public opinion in England. The Socialists certainly advanced their views in the most offensive manner that was possible, and the leaders of the movement courted controversy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the champions of existing creeds arose on every side eager to extinguish the dangerous heresy that had sprung up among them. The Provost of Glasgow interrupted Mr. Campbell in the preaching of the Gospel in the Green on Sunday.* The missionaries complain that rooms are refused to them for the celebration of their religion.† The Bishop of Chester would not license their halls.‡ Their efforts were attended by riots and persecutions at Bristol.§ At Cheltenham they had to encounter the "diabolical misrepresentations" of the clergyman, Mr. Close.|| Elsewhere they had to refute that "cowardly slanderer," Mr. Barker.** They were termed "Missionaries of Satan," or "strolling vagabonds, whose only occupation was that of treason and blasphemy."†† Mr. Giles, a Baptist minister, remarkable for much energy of thought and expression, observed that "Socialism was a union of all sects but the worshippers of God, and of all practices but those

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 370.
† Congress, 1840.
‡ Congress, 1842.
§ 'New Moral World,' vol. ix. p. 332.
|| *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1087.
** *Ibid.* p. 1069.
†† *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 490.

of chastity and virtue."* The "New Moral World," according to the same reverend critic, "offered a way to perfect happiness by blending the blasphemy of the Atheist with the sensuality of the brute."† A workman complains that he was summarily dismissed from his employment because a copy of the 'New Moral World' had been found in his possession.‡ At Warrington, a sexton refused to finish a grave when he found that it was to contain the unhallowed corpse of a Socialist.§ At Manchester the walls were covered with placards against "that den of infamy, the Social Institute."|| But, perhaps, the most scandalous proceeding of which we read in connection with the movement arose from a defect in the law. A follower of Owen, named Connard, experienced the reverses that happen in old society, and became an insolvent. He retained his belief in a future state, but denied eternal punishment. This peculiarity of his creed came out in the course of his examination before Mr. Commissioner Reynolds. That gentleman refused to administer the oath by which alone the bankrupt could regain his liberty; for unless damnation attends perjury, there can be no assurance against it. The consequence was that the unfortunate insolvent was sent back to prison, and detained there for some months, till public opinion had coerced a barbarous law. The commissioner pleaded that it was not in his power to act otherwise, but his language betokens that he was little loath to deny justice upon earth, because a prisoner refused to ascribe in-

* 'Socialism as it Is,' 1838, p. 8.
† *Ibid.* p. 15.
‡ 'New Moral World,' vol. v. p. 102.
§ *Ibid.* vol iv. p. 372.
|| *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 908.

justice to Heaven. Addressing the oth
at the same bar, he said, "For God's sak
his unfortunate companions in prison, do no
the insolvent's horrible impiety: in mercy to hi
think him deranged."*

At length, early in the year 1840, the Bishop of Exeter brought the whole subject of Socialism prominently before the public. He introduced two motions in the Lords against it. In the first, he contended that the Government should prosecute the Rational Religionists, under an Act that had fallen into desuetude, for the repression of organized societies; and in the other he recommended that proceedings should be instituted against them for blasphemy. Upon both occasions he was supported by the Duke of Wellington and several prelates; but their efforts were opposed by the Government, and proved unsuccessful. The conduct of the Bishop of Exeter upon this occasion has been denounced as highly intolerant, yet it was, I think, excusable; at least, in his position. It is, of course, undeniable, that there can be no assurance for truth unless the widest toleration is allowed for the expression of opinion. But truth can suffer in no degree by a certain restraint being imposed upon the manner in which new views are advanced, and the audiences to which they are addressed. Now, if the movement, of which Mr. Owen was the leader, be regarded as purely social, no blame can attach to whoever undertook to warn the Government of what must have appeared an organized conspiracy against its existence. It must not be forgotten that very violent

* 'New Moral World,' vol. vi. pp. 701, 874, 905.

language was used at a time of considerable political excitement, and that it was addressed to men whose passions it was easy to inflame. It must also be remembered that among the doctrines propounded, the exercise of justice was openly denounced, and the assassin of an exalted personage publicly vindicated. We may, I think, pardon the zeal of those who value the preservation of order higher than the encouragement of licence for the anxiety they displayed to check the eloquence of so many dangerous orators. If, on the other hand, we view Mr. Owen as the discoverer of a new philosophy, or as the apostle of a new faith, we should recollect that he selected his disciples from among those who were least capable of adjudicating upon the merits of either. A new religion may, indeed, spring up among the people, and ascend under propitious circumstances, till it subjugates the intellectual to its fanaticism. But truth will first tinge the eminences, and slowly widen downwards till all are included within its circle. In the interest of truth, free speech should be accorded to all, and the stigma that rests upon innovation should be removed; but it is not in the interest of truth that each noisy prophet should strengthen the number of his adherents from the ignorant who are attracted by his violence. And the Bishop of Exeter, and those who thought with him, had exceptional cause for anxiety. A dangerous heresy was abroad that might entail misfortune to which no limits could be assigned; and if, as they well knew, it is no longer possible to "maintain truth" by law, they might, at least, claim for the majority of the nation an exemption from the outrageous blasphemy of reckless

men; they might, with perfect justice, insist that the propaganda should be carried on with a due regard to the feelings of respect and awe with which those who are the most entitled to consideration are accustomed to contemplate the solemn mystery that hangs around the destiny of man.

One instance of some hardship grew out of these proceedings in Parliament. Mr. William Pare was the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages for the Birmingham district. He became an active member of the Socialist body, and it is stated that during the meeting of Congress he made no less than five speeches a day. He rose to be the Vice-President of the Central Board, and carried on the business of the Society in the same building in which his office was situated. This circumstance soon attracted attention, and Mr. Pare withdrew from active participation in the affairs of the Society. Yet, this step did not shield him from persecution. A local clergyman brought the case under the notice of the Bishop of Exeter, and that prelate introduced it with full emphasis into his parliamentary speech. The result was that Mr. Pare was obliged to leave the Government service.* Now, so far as his resignation was forced upon him in consequence of the religious opinions peculiar to Socialism, it was an act of gross intolerance, for which it is impossible to offer the smallest palliation; but if, as is probable, the Government viewed the political doctrines of Socialism as hostile to the existing order of which it is the guardian, then certainly it cannot be reproached

* 'New Moral World,' vol. vii. p. 1122.

for having preferred to select a servant who was not at least its declared enemy.

Yet, notwithstanding the opposition the new views had to encounter, they continued for a time to extend with alarming rapidity. A subscription was raised for the purpose of issuing publications on the subject; and in two years and a half no less than two million tracts had been circulated. At Manchester, where there were 10,000 Socialists, 1000 tracts were distributed every Sunday at the public meetings.* In London, 40,000 were given away gratuitously in one year.† During the Congress in 1839 at Birmingham, half a million were dispersed in a month. Fifty thousand copies of Owen's Manifesto in reply to the Bishop of Exeter were sold. The outline of the Rational system was translated into German, Polish, and Welsh.‡ At one meeting £50 was realized by the sale of pamphlets, varying in price from one penny to sixpence each. The 'New Moral World' enjoyed a circulation of 5000.§ The 'Dispatch,' said to be favourable to Socialism, had the largest circulation of any weekly paper.‖ During one year fifty formidable discussions were held with the clergy.** During another, 1450 lectures were delivered, of which 604 were upon theology and ethics.†† Mr. Owen was particularly successful as a lecturer. At Manchester he delivered two courses, which were sometimes attended by 2500 people, and "almost all," he writes, "who attended

* 'Speech of Bishop of Exeter.'

† 'New Moral World,' vol. ix. p. 316.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1224; vol. ix. p. 332.

§ *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1243.

‖ *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1076.

** *Ibid.* p. 1007.

†† 'Sixth Congress.'

both courses have become converts to the New System, perhaps I may with truth say all."*

It was complained that the Mechanics' Institutions were nearly entirely deserted for the new Social halls.† A school was generally attached to the latter, where the character of the children was carefully formed after the Rational system. At Liverpool, the day-school was attended by 150 children.‡

It was stated upon good authority that Owenism had thus become, in one form or other, the actual creed of a great portion of the "working orders."§ But all the converts were not in humble position. Mr. Pare, for example, was a Superintendent Registrar. Mr. Finch, whose writings were peculiarly forcible, was a merchant of some wealth at Liverpool.|| Mr. Smith, of Salford, built a hall mainly at his own expense.** Several large donations were given for educational purposes. Two securities could be found for £10,000

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 178. These lectures were advertised thus:—"Relief from Bad Times. Double course of lectures by Robert Owen, founder of Infant Schools, originator of the poor colonies in Holland, originator of the National System of Education in Prussia, author of the Bill afterwards spoilt in the House of Commons, and commonly called 'Sir Robert Peel's Bill for regulating the employment of children in factories;' originator and negotiator of the cordial good understanding, since existing, between the British and North American Governments," etc. (*Ibid.* p. 147.)

† *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 239. ‡ 'Proceedings of Congress,' vol. ix.

§ 'Westminster Review,' 1839.

|| He was the author of a work entitled 'The Millennium, the wisdom of Jesus, and the foolery of Sectarianism,' which he "dedicated to the most venerable, wise, virtuous, and benevolent Robert Owen, by the Grace of God, of the New Moral World, Apostle, Defender of Socialism," etc.

** 'New Moral World,' vol. iii. p. 5.

[illegible] to purchase the purchase of an estate.* In some [illegible] the [illegible] received enabled patronage. [illegible] the mayor allowed the Socialists to use the [illegible]. The Prime Minister presented Mr. Owen to the Queen. The missionaries were often able men, and among them there were two or three women.‡ Occasionally they addressed large audiences in the open air; there were 50 towns regularly visited by them, and the whole country had been divided into four-[illegible] missionary districts.‖

But the supporters of the Community Fund had already begun to display an activity equal to the Association of All Classes. The first two years of its existence had not been attended by any success; only 267 members were enrolled, and their small subscriptions, though aided by the profit of a co-operative store, were quite insufficient for the attainment of the object they proposed. At length, however, at the Congress of 1837, a National Community Fund was started at Manchester, and enrolled by Act of Parliament. The subscription was fixed at 1s. a week, and it was determined that no one should be entitled to go upon the land until he had paid £50.** The year after, it was found that the members amounted to 400, and the sum collected to £1200. Their enterprise increased as their prospects brightened; and in 1838 they actually made an offer for an estate in Nor-

* Bishop of Exeter's Speech.

† 'New Moral World,' vol. vii. p. 1076. ‡ Congress, 1840.

§ These were Dundee, Glasgow, New York, Leeds, Wigan, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Yarmouth, Leicester, Birmingham, London, Tytherly, Bristol. ('New Moral World,' vol. vii. p. 1312.)

‖ *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 271; vol. vii. p. 1291. ** 'Social Tracts,' no. 1.

folk, for which they were to pay £11,500. The proposal was at first accepted, but the proprietor subsequently declined to ratify the contract.* Yet the Society was in no degree discouraged, and, in the Congress of 1839, it became finally amalgamated with the Association of All Classes. It was then agreed to assume the common name of "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists." No sooner had this change been effected, and the advocates of community found themselves supported by the powerful organization I have already described, than they made an offer for Tytherly, a farm in Hampshire, consisting of 533 acres. This time they were not disappointed, and in August, 1839, the acquisition was formally announced. £750 was to be paid for a lease of ninety-nine years, at £350 rent.† In order that the supporters of the movement might be increased, the subscription was reduced to 6*d.* a week, and each £1 that was paid constituted a share. In this manner, no less a sum than £3000 was collected in one year.‡ They took possession in October, and Mr. Aldam, an extensive farmer in Derbyshire, and an enthusiastic convert, relinquished his prosperous business, and went to manage the agricultural branch of the new experiment.§ A committee, of which he was one, and Messrs. Finch and Green the others, directed the general business of the community.|| They proposed to erect a row of cot-

* 'New Moral World,' vol. iv. p. 420; vol. v. p. 12.
† *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 681; vol. vii. p. 1219.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1272.
§ *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 775.
|| *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 739.

tages, capable of accommodating 500 persons, the number to be increased as the cause gained more adherents. The members were selected from among the candidates by the Central Board of the Society, a preference being given to those who could pay £50 into the community fund.* In this manner forty-two adults were chosen, and went to carry into execution the new principles they had adopted. But they speedily found their path by no means so smooth as they had expected, and it was considered probable that some among them would be forced to quit; this prognostication was soon verified, and the resident members were subsequently reduced to twelve adults and seven children.† It was discovered, also, that the farm could not be worked to profit, and it became in consequence a serious charge upon the resources of the society. Yet, notwithstanding these reverses, some degree of success was attained. It was found that each member cost 6*s.* 1*d.* a week, and he was maintained upon that sum in a state of luxury unknown to old society. They rose at six and worked till eight, when they breakfasted; their dinner was supplied with meat, vegetables, and puddings; at five, labour ceased, and the remainder of the day was devoted to recreation. Having shaken off the gloom that adheres to old religions, they passed much of their time in singing and dancing. Nor were more serious pursuits forgotten; there were lecturers who addressed them upon all subjects of interest, and teachers who watched over the formation of the youth-

* 'New Moral World,' vol. vi. p. 831.

† Sixth Congress, 'New Moral World,' vol. ix. p. 315.

ful character. The men were employed in the various works that were going forward—sometimes in gardening, farming, or building, sometimes in the construction of the agricultural implements they required. Watch-making was introduced, to employ the leisure that more profitable pursuits sometimes afford. The women performed the domestic service by rotation, so that all might have an equal share of the labour, and be placed in the same position.* Such was the elation produced by these proceedings, that the members began to anticipate the commencement of a new era in the history of mankind; accordingly, the governor dates his letter in the manner of which the following is a specimen:—

16th 4th Mo., Year 1, N.S.
16th Jan. 1840, O.S.

For a time Mr. Owen stood aloof from this experiment; he considered that it had been rashly begun before sufficient funds had been collected. When, therefore, his disciples requested that he should accept the position of governor, he declined, and did not hesitate to say that, though Tytherly might be, as New Harmony once was, a halfway house, or training-place, yet, for the present, it must unite many of the disadvantages of both old and new society, without the recommendations of either.† The events that followed amply justified this opinion. Great dissatisfaction arose with Mr. Finch, who had been appointed governor, and who had prohibited the use of strong drinks;‡ but, besides this, it was inevitable that he should meet

* 'New Moral World,' vol. ix. p. 334. † *Ibid.* vol. vii. p. 1331.
‡ *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 100; vol. vii. 1269.

with much opposition among men who were little disposed to submit to any authority. Accordingly, the officer was frequently changed, without any very satisfactory result. The expenses continued to be considerably in excess of the receipts, and the accession of some one of greater influence and more extended experience in the art of managing men, became urgently required. At length Mr. Owen acceded to the importunities of his disciples, and went, in 1841, to reside as governor of Tytherly. His presence greatly increased the confidence of his disciples, and he found it easy to borrow money upon a large scale. He had started in London a Home Colonization Society, with a view of raising money upon the security of agricultural communities; from this source, and also from personal friends, he obtained large advances. He therefore commenced the erection of a building for the accommodation of the communists, which was called Harmony Hall. An educational establishment was added to the original design, and it was hoped to make it at least self-supporting, for they had already received thirty-five paying pupils. The farm with which they had begun was successively increased by the addition of others in the neighbourhood, till the property amounted to upwards of 1000 acres. This was done under the impression that when the operations became more extended, they would also become more profitable. In a short time £19,000 was thus spent, and the financial difficulty, already formidable, was not by that means diminished. Great dissatisfaction was now expressed with Mr. Owen: he was accused of unwarrantable extravagance; he was taunted with so over-

loading the pages of the 'New Moral World' with his own writings, that the paper became unsaleable; he was denounced as a tyrant, who would receive no counsel, and who would suffer no opposition. At a meeting at which he occupied the chair, a resolution was passed, to the effect that the embarrassments in which Tytherly was placed proceeded from the confidence that had been reposed in him; he was in consequence obliged to resign the governorship of the colony as well as the presidency of the society.* It was soon evident that no benefit could be derived from this change, and six months afterwards both offices were once more conferred upon him.†

But the enthusiasm that had characterized the first proceedings of the Society was rapidly dying away, and the entire movement was hastening to dissolution. The supporters of the General Fund, by which the expenses at Tytherly were in part defrayed, had begun

* Special Congress, 1842.

† A visitor to Tytherly in 1842 described the impressions he received in a letter to the 'Morning Chronicle,' which was afterwards published as a separate tract. He says, "The community do not themselves cultivate the land; some of them work in the garden, but few of them, I suspect, are fitted for rough out-door work. Their number was, at the time I was there, sixty; thirty more were expected soon after." "If they were all willing alike, they are not able alike, nor used alike to such works as cultivating a farm; and I have heard that several of their carpenters, bricklayers, and such-like, are but indifferent workmen when put to a job. In fact, the ignorance of most of those who came here at first of practical matters has led them into extravagant expenses. They have been imposed upon on every hand. Upon the whole, the house (Harmony Hall) is commodious, but I was much disappointed at seeing such a house. A village of cottages (that was the original plan), each with a garden, would surely have been more appropriate for a working community, and much cheaper. . . . The garden contains twenty-seven acres."

to discover that the benefits they had expected to derive, were little likely to be realized. They were disappointed that so few of their number could be relieved from old society, and of those few there was as yet no assurance that their deliverance would be permanent. The very idea of community that was at first hailed with such eager expectation, lost much of its enchantment. Several minor experiments had been tried; at Manea Fen, in Norfolk, at Pant Glas, in Wales, and upon Chat Moss, and they had all terminated in failure. As the early zeal diminished under the influence of these disasters, the subscriptions to the Fund proportionately decreased, till at length the fatal hour approached, and the farm had to be sold.

But its failure had caused also the ruin of the parent Society, from which it sprang. At a time when the expenses of Tytherly absorbed the whole revenue that could be collected, it became necessary to dismiss the Social missionaries, and the people when deprived of their ministrations relapsed into the darkness from which they had for a time emerged.* In some cases a larger sum than was prudent had been expended in the erection of Social halls. At Liverpool, for example, the building had to be given up, and the school from which so much good had been anticipated, was discontinued.† It was complained that the branch societies failed to support the Central Board, and degenerated into mere debating clubs, where curious questions of phrenology and other unimportant matters were discussed. The Society in consequence no longer retained

* Congress, 1842, vol. x. p. 363.

† 'New Moral World,' vol. x. p. 370.

its central organization, and from the isolation that ensued the movement gradually disappeared. It may have lingered for a time in some places, but as it was deprived of the connecting link that formerly united the various societies together, it lost all vitality, and sank into comparative unimportance.

At the time of the disintegration of the Rational Society, and the failure of Tytherly, Mr. Owen was approaching eighty years of age. His energy continued undiminished, and there was, as yet, no appearance of discouragement arising from repeated disappointment. He was not, indeed, able to organize another society, or to direct another experiment, but during the few years of life that remained to him, he continued to publish books and journals, explanatory of the New System; to issue proclamations to kings, to statesmen, to the human race, and to the universe. He, however, sank completely out of the recollection of his generation, and except in the restricted circle of his own friends and followers, it was generally believed that he was dead. At length a church dignitary indulged in a few picturesque details concerning the life of Mr. Owen, which were unhappily, not founded in fact. Mr. Owen condescended to correct them, and the literary world were astonished to find that the old prophet was still amongst them. When, however, the Exhibition of 1851 collected men from all nations, he succeeded in raising sufficient money to disseminate 60,000 tracts, and to have them translated into French and German.* He memorialized the Lords to convert the Crystal Palace into a permanent Lyceum for training

* 'Journal,' vol. i. p. 192.

all future generations in the Rational System. A length, towards the close of 1858, he travelled down t Liverpool to attend the second meeting of the Socia Science Association. He ascended the platform, an began to address the Society, when his once powerfu voice failed, and he had to be carried back to bed Yet, he sufficiently recovered to proceed to his birth place in Wales, where a few days afterwards he died a the age of eighty-seven.

How far radical reform is likely to lead in old societ to the despotism of ignorance is a question that may b hotly disputed. But little doubt can exist as to th tendency of Socialism. It is, indeed, remarkable a being a popular movement to support a tyranny. Mr Owen was not far from the truth when he asserted tha a totally new formation of character was an indispen sable preliminary to the proposed re-organization o society. It was assumed that under the Rationa system no difference of opinion would arise; but, i the event of any audacious innovator attempting t disturb the tranquillity of millennial joy, he was to b removed into an asylum, where, surrounded by "su perior circumstances," he would have the opportunit of recovering his senses at his leisure.* At New

* "All individuals trained, educated, and placed in conformity t the laws of their nature, must of necessity, at all times, think an act rationally, except they shall become physically, intellectually, o morally diseased; in which case the council shall remove them into th hospital for bodily, mental, or moral invalids, where they shall remai until they shall be recovered by the mildest treatment that will effec their cure." (23rd Law, 'Book of the New Moral World,' pt. vi. p. 77. This system was, however, not to be carried into effect until the transi tional period had passed. Due allowance would be made for a time fo the infirmity that attaches to all who have mixed in the "old immora

Harmony and Tytherly, and in the branch societies, popular government had been tried, and in so many instances it had failed, that if Mr. Owen had ever been inclined in that direction, he was fully convinced by experience that it could only lead to confusion. In his own proceedings he exacted the fullest submission, and tyranny was one of the charges the malcontents at Tytherly preferred against him. Although absolute confidence in the truth of his own opinions, and a full consciousness of the insanity* with which every one else was unhappily afflicted may have made him impatient of interference; yet, with rare exceptions, he maintained a remarkable placidity of temper, even when severely tried in many a heated conflict with ecclesiastical opponents.† His character was, however, singularly deficient in imagination and religious feeling; indeed, he seems to have ignored their very existence. He was never weary of denouncing superstition, but he failed to perceive the source in our nature from which it springs. Few men who have thought so deeply, and acted with such consistent nobility, have ever dreamed

world." Accordingly, the 25th law provides for the temporary suspension of the ordinary form of government. (*Ibid.* p. 82.)

* A large part of his various publications he devoted to an elaborate argument to prove that the world is a great lunatic asylum. He deplores "this melancholy disease of the leading members of the human race.' 'New Moral World,' vol. ii. p. 26.) He points out with some degree of force that Members of Parliament are more irrational than many of the inmates of the Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum. (*Ibid.*)

† One of these gentlemen exhorted the philosopher in somewhat vivid language to repent ere the fatal die was cast, lest he should enter into the presence of the Judge "dripping with the blood of souls." (*Ibid.* vol. v. p. 340.) Mr. Owen lamented the "religious insanity" of another of his opponents; and admired the ability from which he argued from his "insane premises." (*Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 193.)

so exclusively of a material paradise, without evincing the smallest indication of any higher aspiration. He was, too, somewhat of an Iconoclast. The want of imagination precluded his sympathizing with modes of thought from which he differed, and justly appreciating the forms of society he denounced. The past was to him wholly evil, and the future, under his guidance, might be wholly good. He sought, therefore, to reverse every institution that had existed, and to destroy the entire literature of superstition.* But the most serious charge that can be brought against the Fatalist philosopher is the narrowness of mind that induced him to impeach the motives of others, and by which he was betrayed into a truly ecclesiastical intolerance that we cannot too much deplore.

If the value of a life be estimated by the good it has accomplished, we must not forget the impulse Mr. Owen has given to the principle of association, which even now contributes to mitigate some of the evils of poverty. We must remember also the stimulus to education afforded by his success at New Lanark, and subsequently by the mental excitement created among the zealous disciples of the rational religion; yet it cannot be denied that much of the evil inseparable from all religious agitation mingled with his later proceedings. Doctrines that deprived life of a noble poetry, and that could inspire but a feeble virtue, were

* "The first step towards the attainment of a rational state of mind among the human race will be to adopt efficient measures to provide, and as they have been created by society to provide well, for the priesthood of all sects; the second to abolish them; the third to destroy all the irrationalizing works of theology which now torment the world, in all its various languages." ('Book of the New Moral World,' pt. iii. p. 56.)

openly advocated; and the controversy they excited led to much acrimony and most intemperate conduct. Yet we can even discern in all the extravagance of the exaggerated and often blasphemous language of the Socialists, a certain nobility of sentiment and justice of moral perception we cannot fail to admire. There was something, too, of grandeur in the vigorous resistance they made to a mischievous fanaticism that exaggerates the depravity of man. There were many of the new disciples who descended into the grave with a justly proud satisfaction in a well-spent life. Abram Combe was among the first to set an example of calm assurance in the moment of death. Arrested in the progress of a movement to which he had sacrificed his life, he endured a long and painful illness with equal resignation and fortitude; and, as the fatal hour approached, he dictated his epitaph to his son in these words:—"His conduct in life met the approbation of his own mind at the hour of death."*

If the new religion encouraged but little hope of immortality, it dispelled the grim terror a disordered fancy has thrown around the future. The benefit it thus conferred was perhaps greater than any evil that might ensue from the gloomy doctrine it taught. One of the disciples lost a daughter of tender age and exquisite beauty; a writer describes her death in words that contrast favourably with those of some fiery theologians:—"In the morning the child died. No pain does little Fanny suffer now. She sleeps as the dead sleep; and in the sleep of the dead is the only true repose. Reader! such sleep will be ours,

* Sargant, 'Life,' p. 293.

and that soon."* One of the most touching of the ceremonies was the burial of their dead. The ne disciples were careful not to imitate the ghastly fun rals of old society. Six girls, selected for their beaut dressed in white and carrying bouquets, would accon pany the corpse; they were sometimes followed by large procession of friends, and Mr. Owen, or one the missionaries, pronounced an oration at the tom The orator sought to quell the chill dread that so fe can resist at such a moment, and to inculcate a man resignation to the irrevocable decrees of fate; an then, with flowers profusely strewed on the grav they laid the dead away to rest.†

A few years before his death, Mr. Owen became convert to spiritualism; and through the agency table-turning, rappings, and other similar phenomen he acquired the most accurate information respectin futurity. It is pleasing to observe, as the shadow darkened around his path, how he caught sight of an other and brighter light beyond the gloom; an wrote concerning the "unimaginable glories and hap piness of a never-ending, progressing immortality." He was already permitted to hold communion wit those who had gone before. Some there were who he had known only through the imperishable record of fame; there were others who had been his ow familiar friends. Among the former may be mentione the ancient prophets of the Hebrews, who frequentl presented themselves to the philosopher of the ne system; among the latter was the Duke of Kent, wh

* 'New Moral World,' vol. viii. p. 63.

† *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 327; vol. vii. p. 1267. ‡ Sargant, p. 336.

has thus been the means of adding another to the single fact that was previously known respecting Heaven. There are, said the royal spirit, no titles of rank among the denizens of Paradise. There have, perhaps, been few men who were so completely "without God in the world" as Mr. Owen, yet now we find him attributing every act of his life to the special intervention of Providence. It must not, however, be supposed that he had relapsed into Christianity. "Let it be told," he says, in one of his latest utterances, "in the voice of thunder to all the devotees of all the religions in the world, that religion has ever been the bane of humanity, and the cause of all its crimes, irrationalities, absurdities, and sufferings; and until these deadening superstitions, based solely on the irrational notion that man can do good to God, shall be removed, root and branch, from humanity, man will remain an insane fanatic and bigot, madly destroying unconsciously his own happiness and the happiness of his fellows."*

Those persons who consider the acceptance of a series of theological propositions of a somewhat intricate character as an essential to virtue, and under whose influence the word 'miscreant' has acquired its present signification, are, of course, little likely to view such a man as this with favour.† But those whose standard of virtue is different, and who hold that the noblest life is compatible with the least orthodox creed,

* Autobiog. App. vol. ii. p. iv.

† We read that "Mr. Stowell one day met the author of the 'New Moral World' in a stage coach. He never missed an opportunity of bringing such men to the test. He tried Robert Owen. He asked him

cannot fail to admire the passionate devotion to a single cause exhibited through a long life, the chivalrous sacrifice of personal ambition and private fortune* to the faithful discharge of duty, the buoyant hope that triumphed over every discouragement, and anticipated a success from every reverse; still more, the honest boldness with which he refused to compromise with error, and, though opposed by all parties, and deserted by many friends, continued to advocate with unwavering steadfastness what he held to be the cause of Truth.

whether his home was a happy one? Whether he enjoyed the peace which his pious wife possessed when she lay upon her death-bed? Owen proudly shook the tear from his eye, and said that he should not allow himself to be overcome by an appeal to his feelings. He wished to shake hands when parting. Mr. Stowell told him that as a fellow-man he should not refuse this parting courtesy, but it must not be construed into an admission that he looked upon him as anything less than a man of most dangerous principles." (Marsden, 'Life of Hugh Stowell,' p. 56.)

* The amount he spent upon his different schemes has been variously estimated from £40,000 to £120,000. (*Cf.* Sargant, p. 326. 'New Moral World,' vol. iv. p. 291.) He never appears to have been reduced to poverty, but his later years are said to have been far removed from wealth.

THE END.

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